



Covid-19 Survey done by the **Diaconal Committee** of the ICRC



August 6th, 2020

During the months of June and July 2020 the Diaconal Committee received feedback from several ICRC member churches, highlighting how the global Covid-19 Pandemic is impacting on them.

In this article we, as Diaconal Committee, serve you with an overview. It is important to note that this overview is not complete, as the situation around Covid-19 is changing rapidly in every country. Nevertheless, this overview gives a reliable first hand impression of how the pandemic is affecting ICRC member churches.

The Diaconal Committee of the ICRC doesn't have a financial budget to help. Rather, the task of the Diaconal Committee is to inform and network among the ICRC member churches, so that you can help one another.

In this survey you will be informed about:

- how to pray for your fellow believers and;
- where to help your fellow believers in the midst of this worldwide pandemic.

Please use this information in order to strengthen our mutual bond!

As Diaconal Committee our prayer is that this survey will lead to action in this regard – action in thanksgiving and prayer, as well as action in mutual outreach. If you are in need of advice on how to practically reach out to other member churches, you are welcome to contact us.

May the LORD use this Covid-19 Pandemic to bring the ICRC members churches closer together!

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North America

1. How are your churches coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Canadian Reformed Churches:

The impact of covid19 on the churches is shaped strongly by government regulations. Since health is within the jurisdiction of the provincial governments, the impact depends on which province a church is in. Most of the impact is seen in worship services. In Ontario churches could for the longest time only livestream services. In British Columbia no more than 50 worshippers could be together in the building. In some provinces singing is not allowed. Most churches have found ways to celebrate the sacraments responsibly, and to collect the offerings.

Fellowship is impacted by limitations on visits. Members have been encouraged to do back yard visits and remain in contact via phone or digital means.

There are economic concerns – both employers and employees are severely impacted – but thus far the impact has not been as serious as feared.

Free Reformed Churches of North America:

Overall quite well. Most of our congregations were not able to worship corporately for a few months, but now can do so to a limited degree.

Heritage Reformed Churches:

Heritage Reformed Churches: Our congregations are following the social distancing and maximum numbers for group gatherings regulations in their respective locations in Canada and the USA. Generally, members attend church services on a rotating basis with the rest connecting online. As I write this (June 1, 2020) some of our congregations are reopening regular services with nearly full congregational attendance, providing seating in every second pew and no nursery provided. Some of our churches are also providing midweek Bible studies, prayer meetings and social connecting opportunities via Zoom. Some consistories are phoning all members on a monthly or bi-weekly basis to maintain contact. Most churches have established a network for phoning single, senior members on a weekly basis and provide shopping, etc. services for seniors desiring this assistance.

One of our congregations has written to its provincial government requesting that further opening be permitted for churches (see attached letter) and other congregations have supported ARPA (Association for Reformed Political Action) Canada's response that churches be treated as an essential service – see link:

<https://arpacanada.ca/news/2020/05/29/over-400-ontario-churches-call-on-premier-to-allow-a-gradual-reopening/>

United Reformed Churches in North America:

All churches (as far as I know) stopped in person services beginning March 22. A few churches (in states that allowed it) were able to begin in person services in May with social distancing restrictions. Some are holding outdoor services in cars in the church parking lot. As of June 1, many have not yet been allowed to start in person worship. Many of our churches have started live streaming services on Facebook or Youtube.

2. How can sister churches be praying for your churches at this time?

Canadian Reformed Churches:

We request prayer that God will grant us protection from illness and strength and care to those most vulnerable, will give us wisdom to obey the authorities responsibly, will grant unity within the congregation as to how best to operate as church, will grant circumstances in which we can freely worship our God, and live our lives, professing and practicing our faith.

We thank God that the impact of the pandemic in Canada has not been as serious as it has been elsewhere.

Free Reformed Churches of North America:

Pray for continued protection and for return of full corporate worship. Pray with thanksgiving for sparing mercies.

Heritage Reformed Churches:

Praying for our elderly members in senior citizen care facilities who have not been permitted to go out or to have visitors for several weeks now. Praying that we may soon be able to gather for worship as a complete body once again.

United Reformed Churches in North America:

Pray for the elderly in senior facilities who are not allowed to see their loved ones or receive any visitors. This is especially hard on married couples where only one partner is in a nursing home, and on those suffering from partial dementia who don't understand why they can't see loved ones. Pray for those who have lost their jobs or business owners who may go bankrupt. Pray that the electronic display of our worship services may reach many new people with the Gospel.

3. How many deaths and serious illnesses due to Covid-19 have you experienced in your churches?

Canadian Reformed Churches:

Deaths: one of an individual in his 90s who had underlying health issues.

Serious illness: only a few are known of

Free Reformed Churches of North America:

We are not aware of any Covid-19 deaths. There have been some who have caught the virus, primarily among health care workers.

Heritage Reformed Churches:

Zero to date, by God's grace.

United Reformed Churches in North America:

I have not heard of any deaths or cases of Covid-19 in the churches with which I am acquainted or from which I receive reports, except for our mission church in Milan, Italy, that had one seriously ill man who has recovered.

4. How does the Covid-19 Pandemic impact on the financial situation of your churches?

Canadian Reformed Churches:

Minimal. Diaconal funds have generally increased as giving increased but expected needs did not materialize. In part this may be due to very generous government assistance given to Canadian taxpayers.

Free Reformed Churches of North America:

To a limited extent, but overall giving has been near normal. Many congregations adapted to online giving.

Heritage Reformed Churches:

So far, no significant impact. Many churches are receiving weekly donations via electronic, direct deposit.

5. Do you have material to share to spiritually strengthen and comfort in the midst of this pandemic? If so, please share with us.

Canadian Reformed Churches:

Many ministers have been creating recorded meditations during this time. The CanRC organized a Day of Prayer for which a resource was produced.

Here's also a link to something that did the rounds in the CanRC and FRC Australia (the FRCA had a Day of Prayer a week later): <https://livestream.com/whcanrc/events/9053050/videos/203393537>

The Lord's Supper solution during lockdown: <https://vimeo.com/427135288>

Canadian Reformed Church, Burlington: We do not have any material to share, however we have had a number of Zoom prayer meetings which have been a blessing and a comfort to those who have participated. We would highly recommend this for any congregation.

Trinity Canadian Reformed Church, Ontario: The hope of the Gospel. We have moved all of our services online for the benefit of those not only in our congregation but those in the Greater Community that needs to hear this message:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6hGaEmGPu3WnkqLPL2UU8A>

Free Reformed Churches of North America:

There have been a few articles in our periodical, The Messenger, which can be found on frcna.org (<http://frcna.org/publications/messenger/messenger-articles>)

Heritage Reformed Churches:

Tract: *Covid-19 The Unseen Enemy.*

United Reformed Churches in North America:

Magazine *Christian Renewal*, edition of May 30th 2020.



Europe

1. How are your churches coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands:

First Response:

- We faced a controlled lockdown from half March till now (2 June 2020). Churches can no longer come together for services; no small meetings are allowed; baptism and communion were advised not to be done. Meetings are held digital by Skype, Teams, Zoom, etc. Pastors worked from home, etc.
- A lot of activities were done to make services held digital. For some churches this was a small step, because they were known with it; for other churches this was a big step. Churches also advised to use the streams of sister churches in the neighbourhood.

Second Response:

- At the moment (June/July) services with physical attendance are again possible. Only with small numbers and strict regulations from the government. Most churches (more than 90 percent) are broadcasting their Sunday services now.
- As weeks and months are passing by, church members miss each other dearly. It is difficult for many of them that no timetable is available in this crisis and there is no point in time on the horizon, when we will be able to come together in our services.
- Congregations are also preparing for the coming season after summer holidays. Lots of questions are asked on how to give lessons to children and youngsters and in which ways elders are able to take pastoral care.

Free Church of Scotland (Continuing):

Most of our congregations, forbidden by government action (and enforced by police action) to meet have, either individually or by co-operation with other congregations, switched most of their activities online. This is made more difficult by poor communications infrastructure in much of the area we cover.

We have experienced blessing in a denomination-wide prayer meeting which has grown to have hundreds join in from outside the denomination each week. Many of our congregations are now reaching out in their online services far beyond our own congregations.

2. How can sister churches be praying for your churches at this time?

Christian Reformed Churches, Netherlands:

First Response:

- Pray for patience in these hard times;
- Pray for wisdom and understanding the will of the Lord, just now;
- Pray for members with serious economic problems;
- Pray for generosity to give for those in need because of this pandemic.

Second Response:

- Pray for medicines and a vaccin to stop the outbreak of the virus. Pray that in the meantime the Holy Spirit will use this outbreak for the good and that church councils are blessed with creativity and perseverance to shepherd the flock in these times, where there are a lot of restrictions which must be obeyed.

- Pray that the outbreak of the virus will remember our citizens that we are vulnerable people, that life is not makeable and that our souls will not rest until they rest in God.
- Pray for the elderly living in elderly homes. They are still not allowed to be visited, except from one and the same family member. For pastors it is very difficult to speak with them, while in these places many people were infected and died of COVID-19.

Free Church of Scotland (Continuing):

Pray for upholding of ministers who are prevented by law from obtaining on-site technical assistance and by equipment shortages from obtaining necessary equipment to engage in broadcasting for the first time.

3. How many deaths and serious illnesses due to Covid-19 have you experienced in your churches?

Christian Reformed Churches, Netherlands:

First Response: In the Netherlands now we have almost 6.000 deaths. CGK has more than 70.000 members on 17 million citizens; so that means that we will have around 25 deaths.

Second Response: We don't have the exact numbers. But in many of our congregations people have died or have been seriously ill. At the moment death numbers and numbers of infection are decreasing. We thank God for that.

Free Church of Scotland (Continuing):

Difficult to estimate accurately, but one of our retired ministers died due to Covid-19.

4. How does the Covid-19 Pandemic impact on the financial situation of your churches?

Christian Reformed Churches, Netherlands:

First Response: That is not clear at this moment. It is difficult to say something about this point now.

Second Response: Financially most of our congregations are doing well. Church members are giving their offerings by bank transfers. At this moment we don't have an overall view on how COVID-19 is affecting our finances. There are some signs that we will stay financially healthy. But we don't know what is yet to come, economically as well as regarding a 'second wave' of infections.

Free Church of Scotland (Continuing):

Not as much as expected, but many of our people have given in the past by putting their money in collections at the church services and there is no legal way of obtaining such givings in cash.

5. Do you have material to share to spiritually strengthen and comfort in the midst of this pandemic? If so, please share with us.

Christian Reformed Churches, Netherlands:

Yes, we have a lot of material ... in Dutch. See the website www.cgk.nl/corona

A lot of new initiatives were taken in many congregations. All of them are in Dutch and most of them are meant to strengthen and comfort local church members. So we don't think these initiatives are suitable for sharing. We may share ideas: using the internet many churches offered during the week

podcasts, hour of spiritual music, short meditations and prayers, Sunday school lessons by video, catechism classes by Skype. In this way some elements of congregational life could be continued.



Asia

1. How are your churches coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Reformed Churches in Indonesia:

Java, Sumba, Bali, East Nusa Tenggara: Our churches do have difficult time coping with the Covid 19. Our churches do not have worship services for several months. Even until now, our churches in Bali and Java still do not have worship services. One church that has been planned to be established in October has been postponed. Our national synod also has been postponed until next year.

Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koshin):

In order to respond to corona, our church first records the temperature, name and phone number of the visitor. Those with high body temperature were isolated from home. During the weekdays, only the front door is closed and the back door is closed to prevent entry. We are working hard on our hands. Clean the space once a week. In order to worship, we sit and worship at a distance of approximately 1M or more. We are not holding many meetings during the week.

Presbyterian Free Church, Central India:

Chhapara: Lock down! It was a very new word for us. Out of nowhere, it came into our lives and stopped almost everything. Like a big pause, in between an interesting and busy movie! As an effect of that, little things that were of no importance, and taken for granted often, suddenly became major and the most pleasant part of our lives. Though lockdown restricted us to our homes, the community life became more meaningful than it was ever before. This atmosphere had made us desire and serve each other in every possible manner. It has changed many things in our lives, not only the things that we used to do but also changed our perspective of worship, family and community.

Regarding worship, the Lord restored the worship to early church format – house worship. On Lord's Day, every family gather at the same time (Morning 9 to 10:00 am and Evening 6:00 to 7:00 pm). Full order of service, from call of worship to the benediction and doxology, is circulated. It contains all the elements of worship, including offerings, and a written sermon to be read.

When, I first circulated that I was afraid, whether it will work well or not. However, I am glad that it has been appreciated a lot and every family is following that. Even, other churches of our denomination have started doing the same. The additional benefit of this is that many young boys and girls are leading in their home service in full and being equipped for church ministry in future. The young men and women are becoming eager and hungry for Lord and his word. Therefore, there are many online activities to serve the youth; we have weekly prayer and Bible study and regular circulation of YouTube videos to the congregations.

2. How can sister churches be praying for your churches at this time?

Reformed Churches in Indonesia:

Java, Sumba, Bali, East Nusa Tenggara: Churches can pray for us so that we may be strengthened and comforted in this difficult time.

Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koshin):

Pray for the saints to overcome their excessive fear and seek a place of worship. Please pray that no one will get corona and live healthily. Please pray so that there will be no difficulty in finances.

Presbyterian Free Church, Central India:

Chhapara:

- Pray for the churches' financial needs. Government has allowed the churches to open but with strict guidelines. We may continue to worship in groups, instead of gathering in one central building, till June 30th.
- Pray for the employment possibilities in our region. Most of our work is based in town and villages, where many people have returned home with no finance. Soon, there will be lack of employment for so many people.
- Due to lack of production and short supply, prices are getting higher in villages and towns.
- Pray for those believers who have lost their employment.
- Pray for new believers in villages. Many of them do not have the privilege of getting connected online.
- Pray for the school staff and their salary requirements.

3. How many deaths and serious illnesses due to Covid-19 have you experienced in your churches?

Reformed Churches in Indonesia:

Java, Sumba, Bali, East Nusa Tenggara: Thankfully, no one is affected in our churches.

Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koshin):

Fortunately, there is no one in our church.

Presbyterian Free Church, Central India:

Chhapara: By God's grace, none of our churches have reported Covid-19 infection and deaths in the churches. However, there are four churches where the infection has spread in the neighborhood.

4. How does the Covid-19 Pandemic impact on the financial situation of your churches?

Reformed Churches in Indonesia:

Java, Sumba, Bali, East Nusa Tenggara: This situation has impact financially on our churches. Many of our members, especially in Bali lost their jobs. Most of our members in Sumba are farmers. They would like to sell pigs, goats, chickens, etc., but nobody buy them.

Presbyterian Church in Korea (Koshin):

The income decreased by about 130 million won compared to last year.

Presbyterian Free Church, Central India:

Chhapara: Things are also getting tough for church and school staff. The offerings of the churches have fallen to zero in many churches and there is no scope of fee collection in schools for next few months. The pastors and church planters have been provided last salary in February 2020 and thereafter, due to lack of offerings, the salary had not been disbursed to them yet. The same is

with the school, after February the staff have been not paid. At the moment, we assume that religious places and schools will be closed for next two months and further. So, there is a big financial challenge to provide the salary of the church and school staff without any local income.

5. Do you have material to share to spiritually strengthen and comfort in the midst of this pandemic? If so, please share with us.

Reformed Churches in Indonesia:

Java, Sumba, Bali, East Nusa Tenggara: No, we do not have material to share. We just encourage and strengthen our members in our preachings.

Presbyterian Free Church, Central India:

Chhapara: We do not have any specific materials to use to comfort and strengthen the congregation in the Faith. But, we do have regular online and telephonic conversations with the people to address the family and individual spiritual needs and struggles. Some of our churches also use TLT materials in this time of crises.



Africa

1. How are your churches coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic?

African Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Kenya:

Our churches submitted to the advice of the health authorities and stopped congregating in the sanctuaries since 15th March this year. We have been delivering the message through online only, which does not reach every member as the technology is not common to all. Over 75% of our congregations are in the semi-arid rural area of Ukambani, categorized as hardship area.

To say the least, the pandemic has hit us hard, depriving us of fellowship which is the lifestyle of Christians.

Free Reformed Churches in South Africa:

As from June 2020, several infections within the FRCSA were recorded, yet so far as we know, no one fatal. Due to the lockdown regulations laid down by government, the churches were not allowed to hold regular worship services from March until June 2020, and services were digitally streamed for members to follow at home, either watching or listening only (with limited data). From June 2020 worship services with a maximum of 50 people are allowed again. Churches have transitioned also towards inking the collections digitally (f.e. using Snapscan).

Because of the isolation, the pastors of the federation have started a joint effort by streaming a daily devotional, which is used by members with much gratitude.

Due to the lockdown of a large part of the economy and the ban on travel, some members have lost their salaries and / or jobs, and many members saw a decrease in salaries. Therefore there is an increased burden on the deacons to assist financially.

2. How can sister churches be praying for your churches at this time?

African Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Kenya:

COVID-19 is a plague to mankind. It is only God the Creator that can lift it from us in whichever way; be it discovery of medicine by medical researchers or by wiping the virus out of the earth. It is therefore incumbent to all churches as body of Christ to pray for one another.

Free Reformed Churches in South Africa:

Despite harsh lockdown measures, in general the members of the FRCSA are doing well in troubling times. This is a reason to thank the Lord.

The peak of Covid-19 infections is still to come in South Africa. Pray that the church members may be spared.

Many members are struggling financially at the moment, and a severe downturn in the economy is foreseen for the coming period. Pray that our members have trust in God's promise: "I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread." (Psalm 37:25)

3. How many deaths and serious illnesses due to Covid-19 have you experienced in your churches?

African Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Kenya:

We must appreciate that as at today 2nd of June the year 2020 as AEPC, we have not experienced any death due to Covid-19. However, the data in our country indicates 3600 cases of illness leading to 100 mortality cases. It's increasing in a very high rate every day. Since we are our brothers' keepers, any loss of life obviously affects us.

Free Reformed Churches in South Africa:

A number of members have become ill, but to date officially no fatalities.

4. How does the Covid-19 Pandemic impact on the financial situation of your churches?

African Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Kenya:

African Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Kenya: The Corona pandemic has led to confinement and closure of businesses in Kenya. Over 95% of AEPC congregations are either doing small businesses or casual laborers, for their daily income and livelihood. Practically we are in a lockdown. The schools which were the complementary source of income to the respective churches were also closed down. Tithing and any financial support has come to near zero. As a pastor, I confess that this has turned to be the most painful moment as I feel for the flock God has given me shepherd.

Is it possible to get support for pastors at least during this time of outcry? Things are not so well its terrible may the sovereign Lord Almighty seriously bestow His mercy upon the world because of His elect.

Free Reformed Churches in South Africa:

The number of households needing financial aid from the deacons has increased significantly.

Deacons have called on members to contribute more, in order for them to assist.

Especially among the mission churches and ex-mission churches the financial situation and increased unemployment is rather alarming. The more affluent churches have reached out to them by way of supplying vouchers for food parcels.

Financial contributions have also been made to organizations in society, reaching out to those affected and infected by Covid-19.

5. Do you have material to share to spiritually strengthen and comfort in the midst of this pandemic? If so, please share with us.

African Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Kenya:

Short Catechism, "The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His will, whereby, by His own glory He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass". And Paul said, "God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will ". { Ephesians 1; 11}.

And C.S.Lewis, in 1942, stated, "Satan will cause anxiety, fear, and panic, will shut down businesses, schools, places of worship, and sports events. But, Jesus "will bring together neighbors, restore the family unit"

Now it is God's time to reveal the Unity, Oneness of his body universally, "the Church".

The unity and fellowship of body of Christ is very vital and essential such time of today, It's our mandate every day to exhort one another. In order to avoid no one misses the gift of eternal life. So as our brothers' keeper as well sisters, we ought to play our roles orderly as we're entrusted by the Lord the author his body. So we manifest and show brotherly love to one another, we need each

other, we reflect the words of apostle, “ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those with those who weep” [Romans,12;15].

Also Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” {Mathew , 25;40}. So what else, dear beloved Ones, accept His will, do the right thing and exhort one another, as the day draws closer. Amen.

Free Reformed Churches in South Africa:

The following links will bring you to daily devotionals that are sent to all members during the Covid-19 lockdown period:

English language:

Genesis 6: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtDGQEqHtCA>

Leviticus 13 (Leprosy in the Bible and the Corona Pandemic):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJfTGPPX2SI>

Exodus 4 & Numbers 12 (Leprosy in the Bible and the Corona Pandemic):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8xrsZ73kig>

Matthew 8 (Leprosy in the Bible and the Corona Pandemic):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEtdf_v35Nw

Job 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNBapqrkFYw>

Afrikaans language:

Video: <https://kerkradio.co.za/churchpage2.php?c=2020040005&play=t>

Audio: <https://kerkradio.co.za/churchpage2.php?c=2020040006&play=t>

The following links will bring you to sermons dealing with the Covid-19 crisis:

Afrikaans language:

1 Kings 8:37-40: <https://www.vgk.org.za/preke/25291>

Psalms 42 & 32: <https://www.vgk.org.za/preke/25292>

Psalms 22: <https://www.vgk.org.za/preke/25294>

Acts 28:30-31: <https://www.vgk.org.za/preke/25296>

1 Tim 6:6-8: <https://www.vgk.org.za/preke/25297>



Australasia

1. How are your churches coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Christian Reformed Churches of Australia:

Most of our churches have rapidly responded to gathering restrictions by offering either live or pre-recorded Sunday services over the internet. Members who have lost their jobs or had reduced hours have been able to access significant government support. Research conducted crossdenominationally in Australia by the Centre for Ministry Development from Christ College, NSW indicated that a large number of pastors and church leaders are tired yet hopeful. We expect that would be mirrored across our pastors and office-bearers, yet God has been our strength in the midst of the rapid changes that we have experienced.

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

We have set up a teleconference in most churches with some also doing zoom meetings and online services. Elders have done more visiting than usual.

Reformed Churches of New Zealand:

The RCNZ coped well. Each church found a way to stream its worship services during the lockdown and each church was free to use a favourite technology - Zoom, YouTube or FaceBook were popular. Either side of the lockdown, there were restrictions on the number of people who could attend a worship, wedding or funeral service – each church used various techniques to split the congregation into smaller groups, either alphabetically by name or by district or home group. Offerings were able to be made by on-line banking. For committee meetings, other applications were also used, eg Skype and Google.Meet were also available. Currently, the pandemic does not affect any church activities (refer to the Appendix for further explanation).

2. How can sister churches be praying for your churches at this time?

Christian Reformed Churches of Australia:

Pray that we would retain an outward gospel-generosity that doesn't focus our energy solely on maintaining our own growth in Christ and pastoral shepherding. Pray that we would instead seek to reach the lost for Christ as we offer hope into the crumbling foundations of secularism. Pray for tired church leaders to have the strength to do this well, to the honour and glory of God.

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

For safety of members especially the elderly. For return to normal services - as a small congregation we are able to meet again in June here in NSW, Australia

Reformed Churches of New Zealand:

In the context of the way that New Zealand has coped with the pandemic, it is probably more appropriate for the RCNZ to be praying for Christians in other countries.

3. How many deaths and serious illnesses due to Covid-19 have you experienced in your churches?

Christian Reformed Churches of Australia:

None that we are aware of.

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

None.

Reformed Churches of New Zealand:

We are not aware of any deaths or serious illnesses occurring in the RCNZ as a result of Covid 19.

4. How does the Covid-19 Pandemic impact on the financial situation of your churches?

Christian Reformed Churches of Australia:

Anecdotally, it seems that there has been minimal financial impact on the majority of our churches at this stage.

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

Offerings are down but Government wonderfully gave a cash grant- without us applying.

Reformed Churches of New Zealand:

At this stage, there have been no reports of churches being in financial trouble. Some churches will be feeling the effect of unemployment but the unemployment rate in New Zealand, although rising, is tolerable and is some distance from reaching alarming levels. New Zealand has a good social welfare system which provides unemployment payments. The Government of New Zealand has arranged substantial borrowing to fund subsidies and job creation schemes in an effort to support the unemployed, underprivileged and the wider economy. At the date of writing, there is no cause for concern within the RCNZ.

5. Do you have material to share to spiritually strengthen and comfort in the midst of this pandemic? If so, please share with us.

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia: We gave a copy of Martyn Lloyd-Jones booklet 'From Fear to Faith' to everyone.

Reformed Churches of New Zealand:

The RCNZ has been mercifully spared from the tragedy being experienced within other countries and within the churches in those countries. The RCNZ has consistently supported underprivileged as our members do good and share with others (Heb 13:16). Since the denomination is small, the aid, although generous when measured by the membership of the RCNZ, is most effective when it is targeted towards specific projects especially smaller ones. We are acutely aware that Christians in other countries have experienced suffering and death within their families and within their churches and we suffer with them as if we ourselves are also suffering (Heb 13:3). We encourage our churches to pray to our loving Heavenly Father for all our brothers and sisters all over the world. Our prayers are not restricted to Covid 19 but encompass all the hardships that result from the political and economic oppression which Christians are subjected to. In our prayers, we also thank God for our brothers and sisters who are loved by the Lord, who were chosen to be saved through belief in the truth and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.