



### Analysis of COVID 19 and Opening the Assembly

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

It has been awhile since we had our last chat. Have you missed me? Probably not. Maybe it was more like a relief. I have been busy with a garden that won't cooperate; seeds that won't sprout, weather that is first too cold, then too wet, then too hot, and then too dry; and a construction project that has been complicated, difficult, and confusing. But as the bard said, "All's well that ends well."

We are about five or six weeks into the country opening up and a strange phenomenon is now emerging; namely, that COVID 19 has been, at best, grossly exaggerated or, at worst, a complete hoax. I predicted a month or two ago that we would get this from some of the politicians, segments of the news media, and internet postings from uninformed folks with no responsibility to help a bad situation be resolved. If the notion prevails that COVID 19 is not really real or that it is no worse than ordinary flue, it will make opening the assembly considerably more difficult and dangerous. We must be in agreement that the virus is a serious matter, otherwise it will make implementing safety procedures ineffective because they may be rejected by some or not seriously followed by others. Protective measures are only as effective as they are accepted as wise and necessary by everyone.

Therefore, as we approach the possibility of opening, it is essential that we give the situation a serious analysis based upon the best available information and not on random anecdotal conversations and internet postings. We must look at the facts and dismiss the political diatribe, unsubstantiated opinions, and babbling rhetoric from the internet. What follows today and the next three Facebook messages which will follow in daily succession is my best assessment of the COVID 19 challenge to opening the assembly.

First, we have to exercise common sense. Making decisions on feelings, hopes, maybes, and unverified or unverifiable reports is not a common sense approach.

Two, there is not that much conflicting information forthcoming from the medical community regarding how to cope day to day with the virus. Our cause would be best served to leave the political commentary, Facebook postings, blogging, and other assorted internet opinions out of the analysis and use the best available information that we have.

Three, we should be able to agree that for the most part the medical community is apolitical. When they are fighting disease 24/7, and fatigued, and stressed therefrom, they only want to beat the virus, not score political points. Of all groups the medical community is among the least political in the nation when it comes to meeting health needs of people.

If there has been conflicting information about how to respond to the epidemic, it is because COVID 19 was a new disease whose characteristics and effects were unknown at the beginning of the outbreak. China allowed nearly 500,000 visits of its citizens to the U. S. between the time of their outbreak and the first admission to the virus. In the beginning the CDC thought that masks and other mitigating procedures may not be necessary. In the beginning it was unknown that one could become infected with the virus and not know it. It was unknown that you could carry the virus for 5 – 6 days and, in some cases, up to 14 days and not show symptoms. It was not known that one could become infected and never show symptoms; thus, becoming a silent carrier of the disease. When these things became known, the disease began to spread rapidly, and deaths began to mount, the CDC changed its policy recommendations.

If you go to the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>), you will find the following for dealing with COVID 19:

Know How It Spreads:

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
  - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
  - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.

- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

#### Wash Your Hands Often:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- It's especially important to wash:
  - Before eating or preparing food
  - Before touching your face
  - After using the restroom
  - After leaving a public place
  - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
  - After handling your cloth face covering
  - After changing a diaper
  - After caring for someone sick
  - After touching animals or pets
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

#### Avoid Close Contact:

- Inside your home: Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- Outside your home: Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who don't live in your household.
  - **Remember** that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
  - Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.
  - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

#### Cover Your Mouth and Nose with a Cloth Face Cover When Around Others:

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- **The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people** in case you are infected.
- Everyone should wear a **cloth face cover** in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
  - Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker. Currently, surgical masks and N95 respirators are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.
- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.

#### Cover coughs and sneezes:

- Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

#### Clean and disinfect:

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work.

#### Monitor Your Health Daily:

- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
  - Especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.
- Take your temperature if symptoms develop.

- Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.
- Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.

I have looked at the Cleveland Clinic, the Mayo Clinic, and John Hopkins University Hospital websites and they all present the same information. I went 2 weeks ago to a 5.0 rated dermatology clinic in Pittsburgh where these procedures were rigidly followed. A local doctor presents an ad on TV that if 4 out of 5 people would wear masks this virus could be eradicated. This should at least dispel the notion of conflicting information about how to deal with this epidemic. Let us collect our information from reliable sources as we consider when and how to reopen the assembly.

More tomorrow. Until the next time,

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may His light shine upon you and grant you peace.

Love,

Jim and Sharon