



CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS
200 EAST D ST, P.O. BOX 220
HILLSBORO, KS 67063

P 620.947.3151 F 620.947.3266
TOLL FREE 800.551.1547
www.mbfoundation.com

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An Open Letter to our National MB family:

COVID-19 likely has your head spinning. The situation is changing rapidly. When was the last time your church was closed on a Sunday morning for something other than the weather? My children in Holland, MI tell me they have announced the closure of the Tulip Time Festival, a first in its 91 year history. Of course, this scenario is being played out across the world.

Nonprofit organizations like your local church, are particularly vulnerable. They scrambled to postpone or cancel events, fundraisers and worship gatherings which will produce major budget deficits; **a shortage of resources right when the church and Christian ministries are needed the most!** Churches have more financial exposure than most nonprofits as for centuries the encouragement has been to spend everything, don't have a reserve, live by faith... and now the result of this will be very evident. At MB Foundation, we have long advocated for an emergency fund in our churches of 1½ to 3 months of the operating budget. Something for your leadership to reconsider when this crisis is over. Our pastors and church staff are concerned about their paycheck just like everyone else.

I'm hearing from churches that are planning for up to a 40% decrease in revenue! Wouldn't it be an amazing testimony if we proved these projections wrong and made gifts to our church at an encouraging rate?! What if our revenues didn't dip at all? Wouldn't THAT be a testimony to the world! I encourage you to re-read Genesis 41 with this pandemic in mind. For decades we have lived in the most prosperous nation the world has ever known. Many of us have "grain in our storehouses" (retirement funds, savings accounts, properties) from years of abundance and I have to wonder if God has blessed us for this exact time. Is it time to open our storehouses and to aid in the "famine"?

I implore you to "stay engaged" with your church community. Make special effort to reach out to your church staff and others in your church family that may be lonely or especially impacted. Offer encouragement. Pray with them. Catch up! Serve. Specifically, I would encourage you to do three things for your local church and the nonprofits you are connected to:

1. Give – Perhaps your income is unaffected by this situation. Be thankful and express your gratitude to God through worshipful giving. Maybe your income is significantly impacted. This is still a time to express love, worship and honor to the One who is still in control and will be faithful. Mail a check. Donate online. Dig deep.
2. Pray – Our world, nation, community and church need our prayers. Take advantage of the "down time" and spend extra time in prayer.
3. Volunteer – I am so encouraged by the story coming out of Neighborhood Church in Visalia, CA who is serving the families of first responders. We need to be the church, in spite of our worries. For the full story, visit <https://christianleadermag.com/usmb-churches-ministries-make-changes-in-response-to-coronavirus/>.

If you are able to make an extra gift, we encourage you to give to the MB Foundation COVID-19 Church Relief Fund. This fund will be used to benefit our churches that are most impacted by the crisis. By donating extra resources to this fund, we will be joining forces to help churches:

- Maintain financial stability
- Eliminate major staff transitions
- Continue to preach the Word of God and provide pastoral care.

You may donate by sending funds to MB Foundation designated to the Relief Fund or go here www.mbfoundation.com/COVID19ChurchReliefFund to make an online donation.

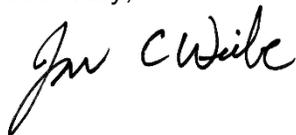
One donor heard about this fund and has pledged \$25,000 as a dollar for dollar match! MB Foundation has decided to join this donor, and as a result, \$50,000 is now available as a dollar for dollar match! **Please join us in raising \$100,000 to take full advantage of these matching funds.**

I close with these words which are so applicable for us today from 2 Corinthians 8:1-5:

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. ² In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. ⁵ And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

May we be the church the world needs today, just as the Macedonian church was the church needed in their day.

Gratefully,



Jon C Wiebe
President & CEO