

## A letter to Southern Baptists

by Ronnie Floyd, posted Thursday, March 19, 2020 (one month ago)

Dear Southern Baptists,

Our work as Southern Baptists is alive and well around the world. While the coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic is affecting our lives and churches, the Lord is using this threatening force to open doors for us to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the whole world. While communities, cities and even countries are slowing to a standstill, the Lord still reigns in all of His power and glory.

Our churches and pastors are laboring in an unceasing manner, ministering to their own people in need, and also responding to the emerging needs of people in their respective communities. I want to assure you that our associations, state conventions and national entities are busy doing the same.

Even though we are all operating in new and different ways in these uncertain times, we are in continual communication with one another. We are giving ourselves to assisting our churches, communicating with and encouraging our pastors, and doing our work in a more focused way than ever before.

God is using this global pandemic to bring us together, to communicate with one another regularly, and to sharpen our focus like never before. We are doing all we can with all God has entrusted to us to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in every town, every city, every state and every nation.

God is opening the hearts of the lost and hopeless like never before. He is calling His people to Himself like never before. The urgency of reaching every person for Jesus Christ has never been more pressing in our generation. Whatever God is doing and however God is wanting to use these unprecedented circumstances in our generation, we need to be more prayerful than ever before.

We thank God for the blessing of technology because circumstances have prevented most of our churches from meeting together in person. We do not know how long this will be necessary, but we do know God is drawing people to Himself, as churches are seeing great numbers tuning in online, and the harvest of the lost is occurring.

Many of our churches are beginning to livestream their services, joining those that had already embraced the technology. Other churches and the support systems at every level of our Southern Baptist work are helping make this possible.

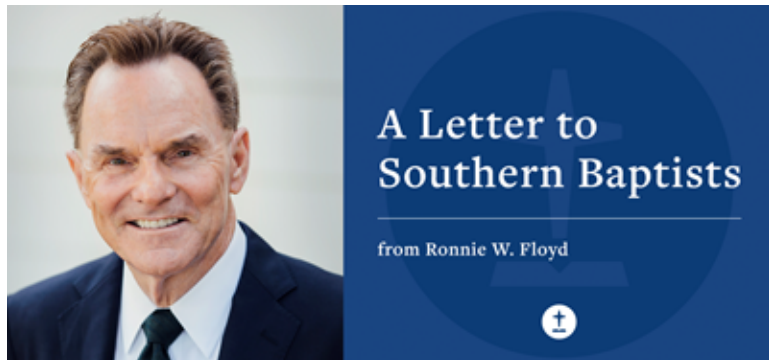
Let me share an update of all we have seen amid rapid global change:

-- On Thursday, March 12, many of our Southern Baptist leaders joined me in designating Sunday, March 15, a day of prayer for the Coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic. The response was amazing. Our Day of Prayer posts reached more than 1.1 million people via Facebook last week. This unprecedented response from our people and churches demonstrates how much we recognize that we must call upon God in these uncertain times. But, the prayer does not need to cease or even slack (we're told in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to "pray constantly").

Each of us personally -- and our churches collectively -- must increase in prayer. Together, this is a time for us to practice extraordinary prayer and seek the Lord. We join those who have gone before us by calling out these words to God: "We do not know what to do, but we look to you." 2 Chronicles 20:12

-- Pastors and church leaders, communicate with your people continually and do all you can each Sunday, however you may have to do it, to preach the Word of God, share the Good News of Jesus Christ, and call upon people to follow Jesus. Yes, people need Jesus, and people need Jesus now.

Serve your church, take care of the people, encourage families who are spending more time with one another, and look for opportunities to minister to the people in your community. One small act of kindness and compassion may open doors to share Jesus Christ with them. It may also reset their understanding of who your church is and what your church is about.



-- Churches helping churches is also very important. There may be churches in your immediate region that your church has the ability to help financially through this crisis. Whether you are helping a pastor and/or a church that is in need, let's do whatever is necessary to remind everyone: We are in this together and will get through it together.

-- To all of us as Southern Baptists, please remember to pray for and support our 3,700 missionaries (and their 2,880 children), who are doing all they can to take the Gospel to the peoples outside the United States. Additionally, pray for and support our 5,017 missionaries here in North America. Furthermore, please do not forget to pray for and support our 3,500-plus endorsed chaplains.

While the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board are both facing unprecedented challenges, our six seminaries are now preparing to train more than 23,800 seminary students via technology after dismissing on-campus instruction for the remainder of the semester. Our other national entities and each of our state conventions and associations are trying to do ministry in ways they have never done before. Each of us need the wisdom of God, the discernment of the Holy Spirit in decision-making, and the courage to face these times with faith, perseverance and hope. May this global crisis grant to each of us insight and innovation in ministry that we would not have had otherwise.

Finally, in times like these, we need the hand of God upon us like never before. The foundations of our nation are being shaken, the fear of the unknown is ever-present, and desperation is rising across the globe. We are praying for Southern Baptist churches to rise up with a confident resolve that God is up to something great among us.

May this be a generational moment when the Lord revives His church in America, and His Spirit ushers in the next Great Awakening in the United States of America. May it set a new path forward for our nation in every way, and set our hearts focused as never before on reaching every person for Jesus Christ in every town, every city, every state and every nation.

We are praying for you.

Now Is The Time To Lead,

Ronnie W. Floyd

President & CEO

SBC Executive Committee