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ENGAGING CULTURE (/BLOG/ENGAGING-CULTURE)

# Hope and Perspective Amid COVID-19

*Partners with the President with Kevin Kompelien*

Kevin Kompelien (/blog/authors/kevin-kompelien)

March 20, 2020



(<https://twitter.com/efca>)

*Every month, EFCA President Kevin Kompelien highlights stories, vision and leadership from around the EFCA in his monthly e-newsletter, "Partners with the President (<http://efca.org/partners-president>)."* This month, Kevin provided a message of hope, perspective and encouragement amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

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Several weeks ago, our lives were pretty normal—or at least as normal as life can be in 2020. The places we went and the people with whom we interacted were mostly the same places and people as previous weeks. For most of us, the rhythm of life was “humming along.”

*The state of the world changed more rapidly than I can remember at any other time in my life.*

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Then, seemingly with little warning, the tidal wave called COVID-19 hit Asia, then Europe, then the United States. In a matter of days, this pandemic suspended sports, shut down businesses, restaurants and schools, moved church services online and fluctuated the stock market to extremes. The state of the world changed more rapidly than I can remember at any other time in my life.



Kevin (back, middle), Becky (middle), Becky's mother (front, middle) and their family at Christmas.

Today, Becky and I are at home in San Jose under a “shelter in place” order from the Health Officer of our county. Becky’s 90-year-old mother lives with us and, due to her age and serious health concerns, is among the most vulnerable to the virus. I find myself prayerfully concerned for:

- Our family
- EFCA churches, national and district office staff
- ReachGlobal staff and partners around the world
- Potential financial challenges in the days ahead

The dangers are real, and the challenges seem to be growing.

When life radically changes, there's a temptation to succumb to fear in the face of what feels like chaos. In the past several days, our world seems to have flipped upside-down without a clear timeline for when things may end or return to some semblance of "normalcy." It is right for us to have an appropriate level of concern and preparation following the recommendations of the health officials in our communities. In addition, the economic uncertainties for many are very real.

*The history of the Church is filled with stories of God's people walking by faith in the face of fearful events and caring for one another when others are paralyzed by fear.*

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For those of us who follow Jesus, however, there is far more here than we may initially see. The history of the Church is filled with stories of God's people walking by faith in the face of fearful events and caring for one another when others are paralyzed by fear.

So, in light of that history and our current situation, let's ask ourselves these two questions:

1. Where do we turn for hope and perspective when everything seems to be in chaos?
2. As His people, what would the Lord have us do in the face of these uncertain and unprecedented days?

**Where we turn for hope and perspective**

I've been encouraged to see EFCA people across the country and ReachGlobal staff around the world turn their focus to the truth of the Scriptures in the face of this uncertainty. Many are spending extra time daily in the Word and in prayer. Personally, I've been focusing time in the book of Psalms. This songbook of God's people has encouraged me greatly. The words in Psalm 46, in particular, deeply touch my heart and bring comfort, hope and peace:

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.” (Psalm 46:1-2)

These verses paint a picture of God as our shelter in which to hide, our strength to bear life's trials and our help that stands ready at our point of need. This is a moving portrait of the God I love and serve.

Kevin provides an update and encouragement from his home in San Jose, California.

These truths empower us to trust and to stand up to fear, even in the face of a cosmic disaster, when things we have never seen before begin to happen. We can have radical faith even when the world around us begins to crumble. It is in times like these that we need to heed the words of the final two verses of Psalm 46:

“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.” (Psalm 46:10-11)

There are times in the noise and chaos when we need to be still before the Lord so He can remind us that He—the Lord of the armies of heaven and the fortress for His people—is with us! We can trust and remain confident in Him to be our refuge, strength and ever-present help.

## What we can do

With a firm foundation rooted in the character of our God and the truth of His Word we can then ask, “What would He have us do?” Let me suggest a few areas where we can focus our time and energy, especially as we have more time at home:

*I’ve seen the Lord most deeply shape my life and teach me about Himself when things seemed the least certain.*

1. **Give more time to reading and studying Scripture**—both individually and with your family—looking for what the Lord desires to teach you in this moment. I’ve started a study on the theme of trust throughout the Bible, which has provided a great source of hope.
2. **Expand your practice of prayer.** There are certainly many people and situations that lend to fervent prayer.
3. **Spend time engaging** with your family and those with whom you have personal contact each day. Fear and uncertainty are real in people’s lives. Heart-to-heart conversations about present challenges and circumstances can be significantly used by God, both in your life and theirs.
4. **Make use of the technology available** to provide care and prayer contacts with people you know. Ask the Lord to guide you to family, friends, people in your church, co-workers and neighbors with whom you could share simple words, prayers or acts of kindness. Pay attention to that “still small voice” as the Lord puts people on your heart.
5. As it is safe for you, **meet the practical needs of people around you.** I know of many churches who are coordinating shopping for senior adults and those most vulnerable to COVID-19. There may be other opportunities in your church or community.
6. **Look for opportunities to share the good news** of the gospel in word and deed. ReachGlobal Crisis Response has a statement I really like: “In the wake of every crisis, God opens a mission field.” Where is that mission field in your life?
7. **Send emails to missionaries** you or your church support and to the staff of your church to tell them you are praying for them. It would be a huge encouragement to them to hear from you!

During the six decades of my life, I've seen the Lord most deeply shape my life and teach me about Himself when things seemed the least certain. During these days, may you desire to rest in the truth of His Word and the reality of His presence, to look for opportunities to touch others' lives with kindness and the truth of the gospel, and to allow the Lord to grow and shape you into more the person He longs for you to be.

Thank you for your partnership in the ministry of the EFCA. Your support and prayers for us mean more than you can know. We count it a privilege to pray for you as well.

*In light of COVID-19, the EFCA national office has created and compiled several resources to encourage and equip our pastors, leaders and congregants. You can find those resources [here \(//www.efca.org/covid-19-resources\)](https://www.efca.org/covid-19-resources).*

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This content and video appeared in the March 2020 edition of Partners with the President. To receive future updates, you can subscribe [here \(//www.efca.org/partners-president\)](https://www.efca.org/partners-president).



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**President, EFCA**

Kevin Kompelien is president of the Evangelical Free Church of America, serving in this role since June 2015. He previously served more than 20 years as a local pastor in the EFCA and then nine years as international leader of the **Africa division**



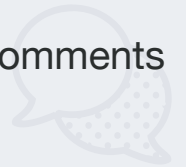
(<http://www.efca.org/ministries/where-we-serve/africa>) with EFCA ReachGlobal (<http://www.efca.org/ministries/reachglobal>). He and his wife, Becky, are members of Hillside EFC (<http://hillside-efc.com/>) in San Jose, California.

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