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Floyd to host prayer conference call on COVID-19

by Diana Chandler, posted Wednesday, February 12, 2020 (2 months ago)

NASHVILLE (BP) -- With coronavirus or COVID-19 killing more than 1,000 people and infecting nearly 43,000 globally, Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President Ronnie Floyd has announced a prayer conference call to comfort and support Asian American pastors and congregations.



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The call, to be hosted by Floyd Thursday (Feb. 13) from 2–2:30 p.m. Central Time from the SBC EC building in Nashville, will include brief updates from Asian American pastors followed by perhaps 25 minutes of prayer.

"As COVID-19 spreads, a great alarm is sounding in China and across the world," Floyd told Baptist Press in announcing the prayer call. "Our Asian American pastors and churches are very concerned about the health of their families and for many in their Asian homelands.

"Therefore, I have asked Peter Yanes, our executive director of Asian American relations and mobilization, to call upon these Asian leaders to join me in a conference call on Thursday where we can hear reports from some of them and then have a season of prayer together for them, their families and their churches."

Floyd called on all Southern Baptists to pray especially on Thursday for the concerns of Asian Americans and the global community during the outbreak, which has spread fear, panic and xenophobia in the midst of death and illness.

Yanes has asked Southern Baptists to be gracious towards Asian American brothers and sisters during this ordeal, avoid animosity and fear, and extend Gospel love.

"For the past few weeks, I've been in contact with some of our Chinese pastors and leaders for updates, and praying with them over the phone, especially the heartbreaking prayer requests shared by families in Wuhan City," Yanes told BP Monday (Feb. 10). "I'm calling all our Southern Baptist pastors and leaders to reach out to our Asian churches in their communities, and find out how they can pray and encourage them."

Yanes has invited "30 key Asian leaders to join" the call, he told BP, "for updates and prayer regarding the coronavirus crisis in China, and on how our Asian American churches are getting affected by it."

Amos Lee, executive director of the Chinese Baptist Fellowship of the USA and Canada, and Jeremy Sin of the North American Mission Board will join Yanes in giving updates on the outbreak before Yanes leads the prayer session.

Lee has shared with Yanes specific prayer requests from Wuhan, China, which has suffered the vast majority of cases.

Deaths from COVID-19, the new name the World Health Organization (WHO) has given the disease to avoid cultural stigma, totaled 1,017 as of Feb. 11, with 108 of those having occurred in the previous 24 hours. Only one death has occurred outside China, in the Philippines, WHO reported.

In the U.S., 13 cases have been reported with no deaths, but fear and xenophobia have risen, according to news reports. Some Chinese American Southern Baptist churches have reported lower attendance during the outbreak, with members holding small-group meetings, meeting electronically or staying home.

In addition to China, the Philippines and the U.S., COVID-19 has been reported in Singapore, Thailand, Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Australia, Vietnam, Germany, France, in 12 other countries and at sea on cruise ships.

WHO provides daily updates on the virus.

