

5/4/2020

Dear CREC Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings in the Lord Jesus from the Presiding Ministers of the CREC.

We do not have to tell you that the times in which we are living are dangerous, you are well aware of that. But it is important to emphasize an insidious danger that we are prone to overlook – the danger of causing unrighteous division in the church and sowing discord among the brethren.

Nothing is easier to do in times like these. So little is known *for certain* about the virus, how it spreads, and how dangerous the consequences might be. The “experts” have been little help. For every expert with an opinion, there is one with an opposing view and with statistics to support their positions! We all have been affected in various ways and most of us have strong opinions about what should or should not be done in response to the problems we face.

Whenever there is a time of uncertainty, danger, and tension, conditions are perfect for producing ungodly strife, sinful wrangling, bitterness, clamor, and evil speaking (Eph. 4:31). In other words, we are living through a time when one of the greatest dangers we face is not sickness or even the loss of a job and income (as terrible as these can be) – but the danger of inflicting dreadful wounds upon the body of Christ and bringing shame and reproach upon God’s kingdom in a time when we, as God’s people, should be instruments of peace, healing, and blessing.

We are thankful for the faithful ministers we have serving in our churches along with those who labor as elders and deacons. We have been blessed with leaders who are men of integrity, men who desire above all things to bring glory to Christ, to lead their congregations in the ways of righteousness, and who seek to be instruments of blessing in their respective communities. It is a great privilege to serve Christ with men like the ones God has given us in the CREC.

But we also know that the best of men are men at best. Good men, wise men, faithful men are also men who do not always make a perfect call. Like parents who are seeking to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, leaders in an effort to do what is best for their people, end up doing some things that are not as helpful as they hoped they would be. Furthermore, their decisions are often going to be met with some level of disagreement by people in their churches. This is inevitable at any time but it is especially so in times like these.

In each of our churches, strong opinions on multiple sides of coronavirus related issues, exist among our people. The pastors are attempting to minister to people with these strongly opposing views and hold their churches together in unity. So, be gracious and patient with those with opposing views in your church, especially if those with opposing views are your pastors, elders and deacons.

It is vital that we remember these realities as our ministers and elders guide us through these days. Every minister is trying to find the way in which we can honor the God-ordained authority of civil rulers while avoiding compromise and bringing dishonor to Jesus. It is a difficult and treacherous path and the right decisions are not obvious.

Within the CREC, we have many pastors, wise, godly and learned men, with a wide range of opposing views on these topics. And thus, it is more important than ever that you be merciful, patient, slow to anger, kind, and give the judgment of charity to your pastors, elders, and deacons. Pray that the Lord will grant them wisdom, courage, and perseverance. Guard your tongue. Be slow to speak and quick to forgive. Seek to impart grace with your words rather than contributing to the confusion and increasing the anxiety around us.

In these ways, we can avoid doing what Paul warns the Ephesians against (a church that was also facing a time of tribulation): “do not give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:27). Satan would love nothing more than to use this crisis to divide our individual churches, divide us as a denomination, and destroy our influence for the Kingdom of Christ. Beware of the devil’s devices.

Love one another. Be patient. The Lord will be faithful to lead us through all this as He has in the past. This, too, will be worked together for our good and His glory. Let us pray that the Lord will empower us to make it through this time *together*, as one body, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.<sup>1</sup> Thessalonians 5:12-13

To God be the glory. Amen.

PMoC Hurt  
Assistant PMoC Craw  
PM Hadding  
PM Wilkins  
PM Strawbridge  
PM Davis  
PM Hatcher  
PM Bryan