



ICP in Times of Crises

Cultural awareness. In an intercultural church all leaders should be trained in their cultural sensitivity. Times like these show how good they are at applying the cultural knowledge they have acquired. Reactions to the coronavirus are deeply cultural. I've rarely seen culture "come to the surface" like this. Our confrontation with opinions and behavior that differ to our reaction to the crises puts our vision and heart for a multicultural community to the test. People that have grown up with the ebolavirus will react very differently to the people that have fled from war or have never experienced any crisis in their lifetime. I (Jason Lim from Frankfurt) suggest "3D gospel" as a great depiction of Roland Muller's worldview model (guilt/innocence, shame/honor, fear/power).

#Use WhatsApp. You can even conduct your Sunday meeting through a WhatsApp group. Example: one Bible section was read in multiple languages and that message was shared. They also sang one line from a song in turn and posted it one after the other.

Use Zoom. Zoom is a really good tool to use. The host must create an account. In the free version you can receive up to 100 people for 40 minutes. Participants just need to install the zoom app and can then enter via your link. Bible studies, prayer meetings etc. We utilize zoom because we include the interaction and allowing more people to participate. That might not work for you. Whatever you utilize, make sure you know the platform well and what your role entails in using it.

Form triads. You can divide the entire community into groups of three. They can develop a relationship with each other in which they encourage and challenge each other to imitate Jesus. As a leader team, you can feed the groups by providing them with a Bible passage that contains three questions that focus on discipleship. Or teach them the Lectio Divina.

Offer help. As a church we can really contribute something unique to society. Let the people know. You can hang posters with the phone number of your pastoral team. Or create a Corona help group via Facebook and let them know that you are available for spiritual guidance. It is used. For example, the Madrid Evangelical Chaplaincy service is available to help. "If you live alone or isolated, and you feel that you need to share your daily life with someone, if the situation worries you, and you want someone to listen to you and share with you some words of encouragement and personal or spiritual edification, get in touch with us and one of our chaplains will talk to you", explains Juan José Román, who is in charge of this service.

Example from Frankfurt: Early in the week we wrote to all sorts of different institutions in our neighborhood (police, schools, programs and initiatives for the elderly) offering our help. We want to react to the situation, but 1. want to do it in partnership with existing initiatives and 2. react to the need, instead of showing up with a set program. That way when unforeseen and more needs arise in the future our willingness and contact is already known in the area.

Pastoral care flow. People will fall off the radar easily. Take care well of everyone in your church and make sure no one goes unnoticed.

Establish a media team and workflow of how your digital comm's will be put out. Don't leave it all to 1 person. They'll burn out.

Prepare financial assistance packages for your poorer members if possible. Some may lose income or their businesses altogether. (Or funeral expenses which hopefully it won't come to that).

Keep good personal rhythms as contact with others drops off. Encourage others to keep them, too.

Kids at home. Think through how to help moms and dads who will be dealing with more home-schooling and stir-crazy kiddos. These days are also important to equip your people to enhance family worship.

What materials can you share with people about fear and loneliness etc? Just make those available or linked to for quick access.

Engage prayer teams with specific requests to be interceded for. Also, for specific people to be saved during this time. Some churches conduct a prayer meeting through Zoom every day from 6.00-6.30.

Use music. Music is so helpful for these days of reclusion. "We have created a playlist on Spotify with the music we usually sing on Sundays, so that everyone can listen to it at home these days". In Germany we will begin regularly sending videos of different people in our church community worshipping God at home and inviting others to sing along.

Spiritual reflections. Every week in Germany we're sending short spiritual reflections in reaction to the current situation. These serve to be a counter voice to the many other things people will be consuming at home and hopefully bring people back to a spiritual perspective of the things around them.

