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The Coffee Baptist Vision

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May 14, 2020**Rev. Bryan Simoneaux**

Moderator

Rev. John Gunter

Hispanic Missionary

Steve Tipton

Vineyard Manager

**A Visit With Dr. John**

We still are under the Governor's shelter in place order, but now with "non-essential businesses" being able to open with limitations. This comes as a lot of people from across the nation are pushing and clamoring to be able to return to life as it was before the middle of March.

Many parts of the country, including ours, have not been hard hit by COVID-19. This probably is in large part because of the shelter in place mandate, social distancing, and other moves and precautions our leaders have urged us to make. If we had experienced the Corona Virus in the way New York has, we probably would be much less anxious to resume all the social interaction we have been used to.

Of course, no one knows what the next few weeks will bring. Some people are predicting that the virus will play out. Some are predicting moderate hikes to what we have now. Others suggest that we may have more trouble than we've had before.

I pray that the ones who suggest things will be much better are the ones who will be right. My personal tendency is to act on and make plans based on what the experts say.

I do urge our people to use caution as we restart the economy. Try to stay a good distance from others. Wash your hands. Also, remember it's not just about you. You may feel strong and able to fight off the virus even if you get it. The likelihood is, you will be able to do that. But we also interact with many elderly and weaker people who may not be able to fight it off. Let concern for these people guide your actions.

In another matter, stemming from the Corona Virus, some religious leaders, from far and wide, have tried to paint what the government has done to protect its citizens as an issue of personal freedom and breach of faith with the constitution. I do not know of a person who is more of an advocate of religious liberty than I. But I do not see this as that kind of problem.

I do see the problem compounding with people not being able to work or to open up their businesses. Lots of people are hurting. The likelihood is that many businesses will not reopen. I truly sympathize with all of this. My heart goes out to these people.

We cannot prevent people from politicizing every little problem. People who have nothing and people from places of power will try to point fingers or brag about what they have done. I cannot do much, but I can keep from jumping in every time somebody wants to fight. I also can verify what people are saying by checking the facts and listening to what the other side actually is saying.

Quite a few good things have been taking place during this troubled time. Without fanfare, John Gunter, our Hispanic missionary, has worked with the schools, with the food bank, and with donors to provide food for families near Faith Community Church, the work at Pine Tree Estates, and at other places throughout our district. These volunteers find fulfillment simply in helping others. The churches in Elba have worked hand-in-hand with the school system to provide meals. The Coffee County Mobile Food Pantry, sponsored by local churches, including a good number of ours, have given away tons of food every month. Last Tuesday alone, they gave out over 16,000 pounds of really nice looking food from just about every category.

It's amazing how many of our churches have taken to the Internet and social media to proclaim the gospel. Although we have not been able to meet as usual, we have been able to give some semblance of normalcy through live streaming devotionals, classes, and worship services. Some have found value in drive-up church during these odd days.

The association office has been closed because we wanted to set an example of following EMA, CDC, and government guidelines. Michele and Emily have been more than willing to do anything at all. I'm thankful we have been able, as an association, to allow them more time with their families. Steve and Brad, along with essential helpers, have not had many people to stay at the Vineyard, but have continued to do work. We can be proud of all of these workers. All of them are good, conscientious people.

I have been able to do a lot of work, which usually is face to face, by phone. And even in this time when churches are not having regular services, I have been able to preach for three churches a week.

Several of my friends have gone to be with the Lord in these last few weeks. We need to pray for Brother Tom Senn, who lost his wife Bette, a few weeks back. Just last week, one of the truly active servants for his church and the association, as well as the community, went to be with the Lord. Ray Helms was an active participant with our Disaster Relief Team and Committee. He and his family have befriended me for 28 years. I truly will miss him. Our prayers are with Gail and the family.

Calendar of Events**May**

25 - Memorial Day - Office Closed

June

4 - Vineyard Work Day - 8:00 AM

4 - Vineyard Meeting - 3:00 PM

Our office is currently closed at this time. Our phone is forwarded to Emily's cell phone. If you need assistance, call 894-6411.

Widows' Ministry Meeting scheduled for June 8, 2020 has been cancelled.

CCBA Ministers' Meetings will be cancelled until further notice.

Enterprise Military Support Group meetings have been cancelled until further notice.

Southwest Alabama Mission Trip

June 21-26

Please call our office if you would like to be a part of the mission trip or for more info.

**Incredicamp 2020****July 6 - 8**

F.A.R.M

Finding a Relationship with the Master

Vineyard Christian Retreat Center

Registration forms can be found at
www.vineyardretreat.org