

Appeal for Prayers to fight against the devastating impacts of covid-19 13 May 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Trust you all are safe and doing well.

This update comes in the midst of the corona pandemic affecting lives here very badly. We have had 2 weeks lockdown and no doubt it will be extended further due to the exponential rise of the corona infection cases. We are facing the 2nd wave along with the devastating increase of the cases in India. This virus with new variant has been transmitting very rapidly and strikes people suddenly. We have nearly 10,000 cases every day and most of them need immediate hospitalisation as having breathing problem as common. It is really alarmingly danger that 50% of the people who tested are diagnosed corona positive which is noted as the highest ratio in the world. Many people are dying, which has crossed 160 people a day. It is sad to see many young people and middle aged people dying this time. List of 100 of church leaders and their families who are suffering badly is being circulated daily for prayers. Almost all the districts have been in lockdown now. Bigger cities like Kathmandu and Pokhara are labelled 'red zone'. It is predicted that next months will be even worse. Hospitals are packed with the covid patients and no room for the general sick people. Almost every house in our neighbourhood has covid infected people.

In the terai area, on the border side where we work, the problem is even worsening as the community people do not take it serous and are not applying safety measures. We receive requests from the people we are working with for help with support in setting up isolation centres, safety gears, medicines and so on. Basic medicines and health supplies have been in shortage in the market and even if available, price has gone high. The health Posts we constructed in Gorakha (around 10) requests for support in setting up isolation



Bir Hospital struggling to cope with the flow of covid patients - Photo form Kantipur Post 13 May 2021

centres and provision for that. Oxygen stock has been running out and people are dying without it. Here is a part of the story how people suffer without this life saving gas that Kathamandu Posts 12 May 2021 writes, "Suraj Shrestha, 32, was admitted to Vayodha Hospital, Balkhu for Covid-19 treatment two days ago, but as his oxygen level sharply dropped, the hospital asked his family to get oxygen for him. According to Shrestha's friend Sanjeev Dhakal, they have been trying hard to get oxygen but without success. "We tried to contact oxygen distributors on numbers we got from social media but no one responded," Dhakal told the Post. "When we tried to reach out to the government through their helplines, the numbers were constantly busy. When someone finally picked up the call, the patient's information was asked and we were told they would get back to us." But there has been no response since then, he said."

People who work in India are invading to home through the open borders we share with India. This sad that many of them bring virus with them and has been a cause of spreading to their families and communities both in cities and in rural villages.

Government has called all the NGOs and other sectors to support them to fight against covid. People with low income dependent on the daily pay, people living with disabilities, children, elderly people and people with chronic illness are of the groups suffering the most due lockdown and impacts of pandemic in their families. People living in the rented rooms are another group who if tested covid positive, are not allowed by the house-owners to get in and they don't have place to go anywhere. We are receiving requests from the people living with disabilities for food supplies. Psychological disorientation is another big problem seen in people mostly in the children and teenagers.

Our staff are also highly affected with this pandemic. Many staff have their families infected and hard to cope with the medical complexity. Some of our staff working in Nawalparasi got infected and going through isolation. They are coping better with the health issues they are having and thank God, they don't yet have to go to hospitals. Some of us have to come to office for work and those who can, are working from home. It is not possible to visit communities in person, however, whatever possible to work through virtual means, staff are working with the communities with it.

We are preparing to respond to the current crisis caused by the covid pandemic. Setting up help a centre providing information, counselling services, connecting people with the service providing sectors, such as hospitals, ambulance provision and referring people to them as needed as well as prayer support will be some of the components. We have to work out for food bank to support people in need of it to survive and sustain the impact of COVID. We will be networking with the other organisations to complement the services such as INF Nepal, Bethesda International, local churches and communities.

During the last week of April, a devastating wildfire consumed 35 houses in Rolpa district and additional two houses were hit by thunder bolts. This was another blow to the people in addition to the corona calamity. We are working together with INF Nepal to provide tin sheets to those households for their shelter. People are living with their neighbours and relatives. A family has to accommodate 3-4 additional families and we can imagine the condition of hygiene, WASH and how they cope with lack of foods and so on. The local



government is trying to meet the need of foods and we were requested to provide tin sheets so that they have safer place to cover their heads from rain and heat. The tin sheet has to be transported in the lockdown and rain has already started damaging some parts of the roads to the affected villages. Thank God for the resources and pray that tins will reach the people as sooner.

Monsoon is going to start soon and we should not forget the disasters of landslides and floods we are having every year. Despite responding to the crisis of corona virus, how we should get prepared for them is another area to think and plan.

Please pray for God's mercy and grace over the people suffering now in the hospitals, at homes and many without health services. Pray for God's wisdom to us, the churches to respond to the need of their people and communities wisely. Pray for God's guidance as we stepping out to set up help centre and help people who are in desperate needs. Pray for God's protection for the teams. Pray that we can be a light and salt to people and share the hope that God has granted to us that there will be light at the end of the tunnel.

Thank you for your continue prayers and support. We are very thankful for you.

God bless you and your family. May He keep you safe in His strong arms.

In HIM,

Raju for PCC/ACN