

ONLINE TOOLS TO MAXIMIZE THE GOOD NEWS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Sadiri Joy Tira

In recent days, Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau instructed Canadians living in diaspora or “scattered” in many regions of the world to “come home.” Further, he admonished all Canadians, except those in “front line services” to “stay home.”

“Enough is enough,” everyone must lock down and lock in.

Those returning to Canada are compelled to say goodbye to friends, relatives, colleagues, in-laws, pets, and favourite establishments left in temporary homes abroad. Upon arrival, everyone is ordered to self-isolate to protect themselves and others at home from the deadly Covid-19 pandemic.

The mandate given to the church of Jesus Christ is to make disciples, to worship, and to preach the gospel. We need to maximize the use of technology. All this can be done virtually.

Most schools have abbreviated their school calendars. Teachers and students are now home-based. Some graduating students may receive diplomas without being hooded by their esteemed professors in grand auditoriums. Missing will be the on-stage thank yous and goodbyes.

Goodbye, National Basketball Association. Goodbye, National Hockey League. Goodbye, ice rinks. Goodbye, professional football games. I imagine the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games organizers said to each other “Sayonara for now” (Goodbye for now).

The Muslims say temporary goodbyes to their pilgrimages to Mecca and their community Eid celebrations. Hindus and Buddhists say goodbye to their regular gatherings in their temples. The Jewish people are saying goodbye to Passover parties (at least for those over five), and the Christians say goodbye to in-person Easter gatherings and adjacent large family dinners.

Yet, amidst the goodbyes, today’s technological advances have welcomed a new kind of gathering.

Arguably, the spreading of Covid-19 has this positive impact on the global church and local congregations: the social distancing our governments and medical community has called us to (in many jurisdictions, has commanded us to) remind the church to be courageous, hopeful, resourceful, even grateful as we seize the unique opportunities granted by virtual

gatherings.

While others find this reality difficult to accept, and although some continue to mourn over our dispersion into smaller groups, we can rejoice in widened platforms for celebrating the sovereignty of God and communicating the Good News.

We can easily dispel fatalism and defeat if we dispel the myth that “big and large” is true success. That is, big church campuses, big budgets, and large crowds are the ultimate signs of success.

While there is truth to these metrics, they belie the true missionality of the church. [Small groups and house churches can be successful too. How would we measure their success? But that is a topic for another day]. For now, the point is, we must say goodbye to our regular large-group model and welcome the virtual congregation model.

The mandate given to the church of Jesus Christ is to make disciples, to worship, and to preach the gospel. We need to maximize the use of technology. All this can be done virtually. Four technological tools have been developed in recent years and are now available: Discipleship Essentials (DE), Discipleship Applied (DA), the Gospel of John/Life of Jesus (LoJ), and Have You Heard (Jewish).

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Discipleship Essentials is a free, flexible, Bible-based, multi-format discipleship training tool that was developed to meet the overwhelming need of the global church for faithful teaching and instruction. It consists of 137 lessons in two overarching themes: Essentials for Christian Living and Essentials for Spiritual Leadership. Discipleship Essentials is designed to equip individuals and active ministries with the resources necessary to help them disciple others. Topics of Discipleship Essentials include: Who Is Jesus, Christian Life and Worldview, Leading Small Groups, Family Life, Leadership Lifestyle, and Christian Doctrine.

Discipleship Applied is a video-training tool that

was designed to inspire and equip believers with a vision and strategy for evangelism, giving leaders a tool to train their potential disciples to lead others to Christ. In turn, they lead and train others, and the result is spiritual multiplication. Some topics covered in Discipleship Applied include: Being Filled with the Holy Spirit, Sharing the Gospel, Walking in the Spirit, and Beginning a Spiritual Movement.

The Gospel of John is a three-hour feature film that faithfully recounts the life of Jesus. It is a word-for-word presentation, dramatized directly from the Good News Bible translation. Millions have viewed this motion picture already.

These three tools are most effectively used together as a comprehensive plan. For example, the Gospel of John can be used to launch an evangelism event. Discipleship Applied can be used to equip followers to boldly evangelize and provide initial new life training that can spawn a spiritual movement. And Discipleship Essentials can be used to help believers grow deeper in their faith through one-on-one or small group engagement.

Of course, each tool can also be used separately, depending on need.

Finally, Have You Heard is a site featuring testimonies of Messianic Jews sharing the truth about Yeshua.

As the Covid 19 pandemic continues, I wonder what the impact would be of thousands of people

watching the life of Jesus told by the Gospel of John. Also what potential would be unlocked in training and multiplying disciples if followers of Jesus Christ were equipped with tools to grow deeper in their faith? Through technology (e.g., streaming sites, social media, and websites), we can accelerate the fulfillment of the Great Commission during this unprecedented moment.

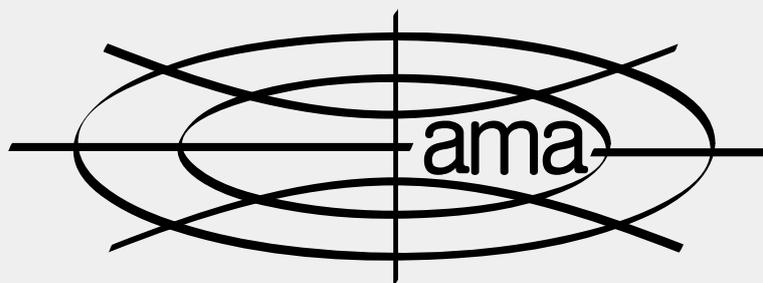
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AMA CONVENTION ANNOUNCEMENT



Please be informed that due to the current health crisis brought by Corona Virus 19 pandemic, the AMA Triennial Convention has been moved from May 23-27, 2022 to May 22-26, 2023 (dates tentative) to be held in Jakarta, Indonesia.

We appreciate the host of the convention, Rev. Johannes Nahuway who has gladly accepted this postponement.

We will give you updates for further details about the AMA Convention!

Let us continue to pray for the world that this CoVid pandemic will come to an end!