



# the fellowship

## “A Message of Hope in Times of Uncertainty” *From the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada*

Canadians are experiencing new heights of uncertainty. COVID-19 has been the cause of daily uncertainty affecting our health, employment, daily routines, travel, and assembling, be it for family gatherings, work, entertainment, sports, or worship services.

### Uncertain Times

Did anyone use the phrase, “social-distancing, self-isolation or flattening the curve” before February 2020? Yet they are in common use today. COVID-19 has made a remarkable impact on our lives and possibly our culture for years to come. In the short-term, our stress, anxiety, and fear have increased even as we seek to resist our temptation toward selfishness. Our better instincts are to care for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs in our communities. Our civil authorities seek to offer their solidarity, however, their assurances are limited. It is God alone who can deliver on His promise to give power, love, and a sound mind instead of a spirit of fear. (1). How do we experience this every day? Our peace, soundness of mind and solidarity with one another is exponentially strengthened by hope. A sure hope. A certain hope. An ultimate hope.

### What is Hope?

Hope is a justifiable optimism that believes things will improve, change for the better, and turn out right in the end. But true hope needs a trustworthy object in which it derives its justification (2). If the object of our hope is not trustworthy, it is futile at best and dangerous at worst. Many Canadians have unfortunately placed their hope in things that are not trustworthy (3). Neither money or jobs, health or retirement, not even family or nation can provide the certain hope we need. Ultimately,

there is no hope in Canadians gathering together in solidarity for solidarity's sake. Such a hope will not last, fully unite us, nor erase the fear and anxiety Canadians are feeling in these uncertain days.

### Our Only Hope

In a spirit of genuine compassion and care, during this or any crisis, our Fellowship of churches is compelled by the love of Jesus Christ to share Good News with our fellow Canadians. The only solidarity that can inspire sure, true, and lasting hope is found in a relationship, not religion. The foundation that can unite us is found only in Jesus Christ who calls us out of our guilt, anxiety, and fear into a fellowship of hope. A hope that is certain because Jesus paid the penalty for our sin by his death on a cross and rose victorious over death. Today He offers eternal life to all who come to Him. True hope is in Christ alone (4).

### Finding True and Lasting Hope

Our only hope during these or any days is found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Good News that Jesus provides the hope we are looking for today and into eternity. In a time when Canadians are witnessing the uncertainty and frailties of life, and we are more open to the spiritual realities of life and possibly more open to seeking wisdom and thinking about eternity, the Bible says Christ has the power to save for He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. (5). We encourage all Canadians to consider Jesus:

- Start by investigating the Bible by reading the fourth book of the New Testament, the Gospel of John, just 21 short chapters which can be read in one brief sitting.

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- A second step would be joining an Alpha ([alphacanada.org](http://alphacanada.org)) or Christianity Explored ([Christianity Explored.org](http://ChristianityExplored.org)) class offered in a church in your community. These short courses provide an opportunity to discover who Jesus is in a non-judgmental environment.
- Thirdly, tune into one of our church's online services this Sunday and hear a message from God's Word.

## A Heartfelt Thank You

During the COVID-19 crisis, Fellowship churches stand together, shoulder to shoulder, with fellow Canadians in assisting any Canadian in need of support, encouragement, and prayer (6). We are especially grateful for and pray earnestly for the many Canadians who sacrificially serve on the front lines of this crisis including our medical care, first responder, and essential workers. We thank you for your commitment to the common good of all Canadians.

We will also listen carefully to our public health authorities and seek to follow the direction of our civil officials (7), allowing hope to direct our thoughts and dictate our actions.

Our churches exist to glorify and serve God, the One who saves. We do this by serving you and encouraging you to hope in Jesus Christ who alone is worthy (8) and is the source of peace that surpasses understanding (9).

May the God of hope and mercy touch your life today.

- (1) "...for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."  
(2 Timothy 1:7 ESV)
- (2) "For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth." (Psalm 71:5 ESV)
- (3) "As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy." (1 Timothy 6:17 ESV)
- (4) "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12 ESV)
- (5) "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" (John 14:6 ESV).
- (6) "The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people." (Titus 3:8 ESV)
- (7) "Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work." (Titus 3:1 ESV)
- (8) "...because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved." (Romans 10:9-10 ESV).
- (9) "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7 ESV)