

Where is God in all this?

- *Our distinctive contribution to the workplaces we visit is that we are there as Christians.*
- *There are no easy answers to the questions people will be asking, but these slides offer some scriptural passages which may be helpful as we think about the issues the pandemic raises.*
- *I'm not suggesting that we should quote scripture to the people we meet – they are to help our thinking.*
- *The slides are to be read alongside the practical and pastoral guidance in the other sections.*

Where is God in all this?

- The pandemic has severely disrupted lives and the economy around the world
- It has particularly hit those who are already poor and disadvantaged
- Its effects will continue for many years
- Faith communities have been unable to meet for worship
- And yet...

- More people are praying (*survey in Church Times, 3rd May 2020*)
- Non-churchgoers are joining on-line or broadcast worship: “A quarter of adults in UK have watched or listened to a religious service since lockdown began.” (*The Guardian, 3rd May 2020*)
- The Vicar of Dibley – Geraldine Grainger, played by Dawn French – would be the public’s choice for a screen priest to lead UK through crisis (*Christian Aid survey*)

The crisis will prompt discussions

- The judgment of God on society?
- The judgment of God on individuals?
- Why does God allow these things?
- How can we pray?
- What can we do?

The judgment of God on society?

- A common theme in the Old Testament (*many examples, including Jeremiah 30: 15*)
- But Jesus' "Parable of the Tenants", Mark 12: 1- 12, makes it clear that He is God's last call to humanity. Any call to repentance is made because of Him, His sacrifice and His message. It isn't on the basis of natural disasters.
- Our message is one of forgiveness (Luke 24: 47)

The judgment of God on individuals?

- The virus affects different people in different ways, sometimes appearing random.
- People sometimes make a simplistic connection between suffering and sin (John 9: 2)
- Jesus gave a clear answer in Luke 13: 1 - 5

Why does God allow these things?

- This is a huge question, one we all ask
- It is all the more difficult for people who have faith (it doesn't arise at all for people who don't believe!)
- Many books have been written on the subject (Theodicy)
- The world isn't as God intends it should be (Romans 8: 18 – 21), or as it will be.

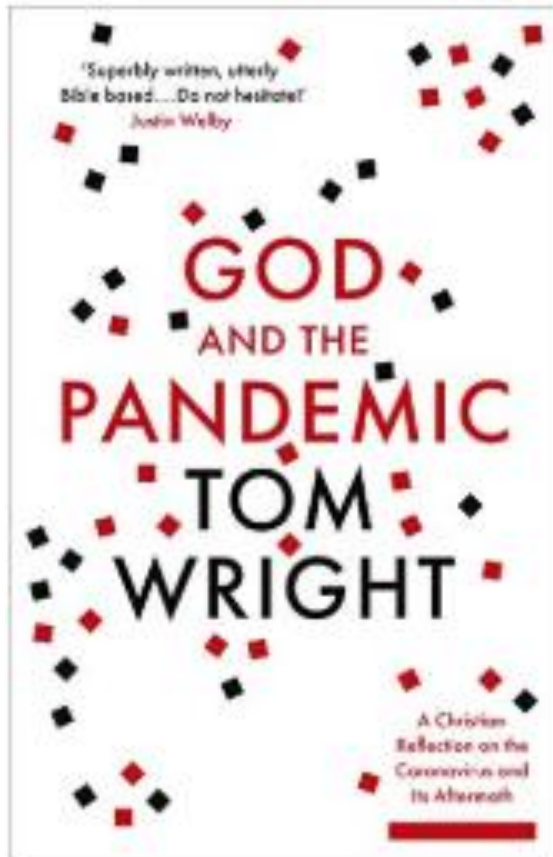
How can we pray?

- We can be honest – we may not know ourselves. (Romans 8: 26)
- Sometimes the only appropriate reaction is lament. Scripture gives us many examples, including Psalms 13 & 102.
- Telling God how we feel, and how dreadful things are, can be the beginning of transformation (Psalm 13: 5, 6)

What can we do?

- Christian history offers many examples of where Christians cared for those afflicted by plagues (E.g. Eusebius writing about Caesarea)
- God calls us to work with Him to fulfil his will (Romans 8: 28 – “for the good of those” can be translated “for good with those”)
- A world subject to frustration gives opportunities for people to show love and care (Ephesians 2: 10)

Recommended Book



God and the Pandemic
Bishop Tom Wright
*A Christian reflection on the
Coronavirus and its aftermath.*

77 pages