



PRESIDING BISHOP BLAKE AND EXPERT COGIC DOCTOR'S STATEMENT ON COVID VACCINE

CORONA
VIRUS
COVID-19

Dear Saints of God,

As we approach the end of 2020, I pray that you are exercising great faith and complete trust in the Lord to finish the year strong. While there is truth in mainstream rhetoric regarding 2020 being a ravaging year - with rampant illness, loss of income, church closures, and numerous beloved saints transitioning to Glory - we are yet blessed. The Bible declares in Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV), "*For I know the plans I have for you, 'declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'*" We can find blessed assurance in this hope that whatever we face, God has a plan for each of our lives. I encourage you to diligently seek His plan, through prayer and supplication, and wholly lean on the God of our salvation through such uncertain times. Know that we are in the war against coronavirus together and with God, we surely win.

I am so grateful that the Church of God in Christ is the highly diverse institution of faith that it is. We are a global body of sanctified believers from various nations, cultures and many walks of life. As such, we are able to provide guidance and wise counsel, in regards to the pandemic we face, from prominent physicians in the field of Medicine who also happen to be committed leaders in the Church of God in Christ.

Bishop Elton Amos, MD, MPH is a Family Practice physician who currently serves as Medical Director of the North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women. In this role, he has extensive patient care experience and is particularly concerned with the availability of healthcare, and with making an impact in the health of the public. Within the Church, Bishop Amos serves as Senior Pastor of Old Landmark Church of God in Christ in Fort Wayne, Indiana. With medical specialties in Correctional Care Medicine, Public Health and Community Health Care, I am confident in the medical background and experience of Dr. Amos as it pertains to advising COGIC adherents in a safe, scientifically-sound and God-guided manner.

Bishop Terence Rhone, D.O. is a Pulmonary and Critical Care physician who is an Associate Professor of Medicine at Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, California. Currently, Bishop Rhone pastors Mt. Sinai Church of God in Christ in Pomona. He is board certified in both Internal Medicine and Pulmonary Disease, specializing in the treatment of lung and respiratory diseases. With the coronavirus causing critical complications of the lungs, such as pneumonia and acute respiratory distress, I have equal confidence and respect in his medical knowledge and have relied on his medically-sound counsel with respect to advising the Church of God in Christ.



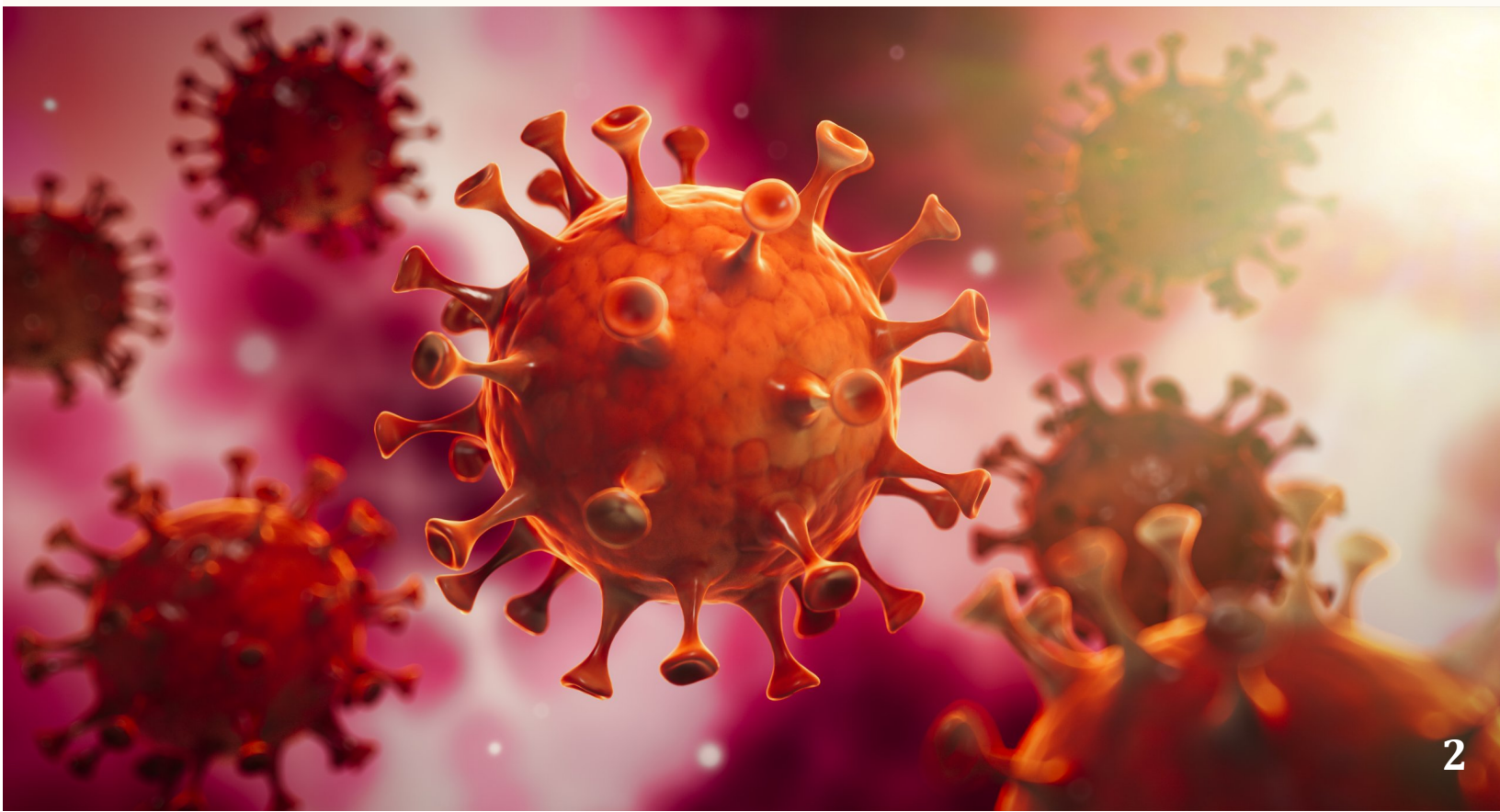
It is my hope that you will prayerfully consider the following guidance from two, well-educated medical experts who are our own. Concurrently, I highly encourage each of you to act as your own healthcare advocates by consulting with your personal practitioners and healthcare providers. Additionally, please thoroughly research and review the guidelines offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) by visiting [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Saints of God, as we educate ourselves and navigate the pandemic as best as we can together, remember that God is exclusively in control. "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

In His Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles E. Blake, Sr.".

Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr.
Presiding Bishop & Chief Apostle
Church of God in Christ, Inc.
Seventh in Succession





PRESIDING BISHOP BLAKE AND EXPERT COGIC DOCTOR'S STATEMENT ON COVID VACCINE

Greetings in the matchless name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

The Year 2020 has been a year of unprecedented difficulty. We have endured the pain of loss, economic hardship, and mental anguish imposed upon us by the sars-coronavirus-2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic. Although some have not been infected, all are impacted by the losses. These may be of friends and family members who have succumbed to this illness. What is especially distressing is that rates of COVID19 infections and deaths remain disproportionately high among African Americans.

The good news is that there is light at the end of the tunnel. The United States government has commissioned several pharmaceutical and biotech companies to develop vaccines against this virus. Two of them have recently been granted emergency use authorization (EUA). Pfizer and Moderna manufacture these vaccines. The Pfizer vaccine is currently in distribution, and Moderna's is expected to launch any day. The United States government has agreed to purchase enough vaccine to cover its entire U.S. population.

A vaccine is a progressive step towards eliminating the threat of COVID-19; however, vaccination is an issue with social implications that leave some segments of the population undecided or committed to avoiding this intervention. Within the African American population, there is palpable reticence towards vaccination. This sentiment is quite understandable, considering the U.S. government's history of experimentation, disparate healthcare services, and willful blindness to the social determinants of health that contribute to people of color's health status. The sudden willingness to serve black America may appear suspect after the Tuskegee experiment, racialization, and high health services cost. These atrocities were recently crowned with the aggressive, though failed attempt to eliminate Obamacare without a replacement. When tied to an election date, the federal government's involvement in the commissioning of vaccine production brings pause. The unprecedented acceleration of research, development, and approval (EUA) also contributes to the unease that some share regarding vaccination.

There are plenty of reasons to avoid vaccination. Nevertheless, a singular truth is evident: Vaccination is the only medical option for the prevention of COVID-19. As jurisdictional bishops, COGIC pastors, and practicing physicians, we want to share three reasons why we believe you should consider receiving this vaccine.

- **#1 The vaccine contains no live virus.** These products are not like influenza (flu) vaccines of the past. The flu vaccines are made up of live attenuated viruses. That means you are injected with modified versions of the virus into your body. An immune response produces antibodies to maintain surveillance for the virus and eliminates it before it can cause illness.

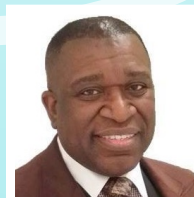
The coronavirus vaccines do not contain live virus. They contain messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA), which are viral proteins that have been synthetically modified to look like the virus. When these proteins are injected into your body, the immune system produces antibodies designed to destroy the COVID-19 before it can cause illness. Some might say, "The last time I got the flu shot, I got sick with the flu!" While this is a real risk with the influenza virus, it is impossible to get COVID with the coronavirus vaccine because there is no live virus in the shot.

- **#2 The Benefits outweigh the risks.** Whenever we decide to administer treatment to a patient for any illness, we always contemplate what benefits the patient might receive from the treatment and weigh them against the treatment's risk. In this case, the benefits of receiving the vaccine far outweigh any risk. And what are those risks? Well, those would include local irritation at the injection site, body aches, and possibly low-grade fever within the first 24 to 48 hours. The benefits are you receive a 95% chance of eradicating the virus in your system before it can make you sick! The result to be expected is that you LIVE and not DIE!
- **#3 This pandemic must come to an end.** To eradicate this disease from our nation, at least 70-80% of the population must become immune. The way we achieve this is by vaccinating the entire population. If there are any doubts about the purity of the U.S. government's motives, please consider this: The first population selected to receive the drug is healthcare workers and patients in skilled nursing facilities. If there was ever a sign of good faith, this is it. Why would any government administer anything to their front-line healthcare workers that had the potential to harm them? The lives that can be saved are done so with the help of God and healthcare workers. Bishop, Dr. Amos and Bishop, Dr. Rhone are front-line workers in the healthcare industry and have committed to receiving the vaccine when it is available to us. We trust God and science, not politics.

Therefore, on behalf of our Presiding Bishop, Charles Edward Blake, we urge you to accept the vaccine when it becomes available. And as a gentle reminder, once you start the process, you must commit to complete it. Both the Pfizer and Moderna products require two injections. The Pfizer product requires a second injection to be given 21 days after the first. The Moderna product requires a second injection to be given 28 days after the first. To achieve the optimum antibody response of near 95% protection, you need to finish the series of two shots.

Bishop Elton Amos, MD, MPH

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