



Update on Kairos During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Evelyn Lemly, CEO)



Greetings Kairos Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What an interesting year and beginning of a new decade 2020 has been so far for Kairos, for our nation, for the world, for the church, for people in general, and especially for black people. I pray we learn from all that is going on so we grow in unity, diversity, and in love for one another.

Let me start with sharing a brief update on Kairos Prison Ministry International. The Board of Directors has defined the criteria for us, with the State Executive Committees' leadership, to begin slowly reopening Kairos locations. In short, they are: Permission; Invitation; Compliance; and Choice. Basically, these mean we go where we have permission to go; we go where we are invited; we follow the rules; and each person has a choice to attend or not. An example of these criteria in play is the Advanced Kairos Training (AKT) in North Carolina scheduled for early July which was cancelled because the facility is not open and we cannot social distance properly. However, we are having AKT in Jacksonville, FL and Huntsville, TX in July as the criteria can be met. We want to keep people safe as we slowly move back to the operations of our ministry.

As state governments start to reopen, we are hearing of interest to begin Kairos activities. We are starting to reopen locations in three states - Florida, Texas, and Delaware, for Kairos activity. Several other State Chairs are reaching out as they consider starting to hold Advisory Council and other meetings, discuss potential Kairos Outside events, while other discussions are occurring. Some of these may start to reopen for Kairos soon. In Florida, we had a small group able to do a Reunion and Prayer and Share in a prison last week. Correctional facilities are starting to communicate but few have announced any dates or criteria at this time for Kairos to go back in.

We do have a Weekend in Nicaragua taking place this week! Keep them in your prayers as they reopen Kairos and are able to be with the men in the facility. We praise God for this opportunity and ask for His protection and provision to all involved.

Please make sure you talk to your State Chair if there are opportunities for Kairos to start reopening for any reason (meetings, reunion, SWAP, Advisory Council meeting, etc.) in your area. It's all small steps but it's a start! Praise God!

Kairos Virtual Annual Conference

As I hope you have heard we will have our first ever Kairos Virtual Annual Conference!

General Session Friday July 24th 7:00 pm
Devotional and Workshops Saturday July 25th

The schedule, workshop descriptions and times are posted on MyKairos.org/conference. Further information on access to the Annual Conference will be shared as we get closer. All Kairos volunteers are welcome.

Unity and Diversity in the Body

Moving to what is happening in our world, not Coronavirus related, is the oppression of people, specifically black people, and people now standing in the gap saying enough. I shared with the staff in devotions a few days ago, my thoughts using *1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (NIV)*. My key points were: we are Christians and are part of a body that is greater than ourselves. All are welcome and all parts are different for a purpose and in their differences they must work together. There is no part that is not important and of equal value. When each part has a role in the body it is for the greater good. And no part of the body has the right to say I don't need you as stated in the scripture. We all need each other and all parts of the body are important for us to function well and correctly as God designed and created us to do. While we are all different, the Kairos call of "better together" is never truer than when we, each of us with our different heritages, colors, backgrounds, and so many different gifts come together as the perfect body of Christ. We honor each other as we honor His Spirit that brings a unity we could never achieve on our own. In this body there are only people serving our Lord Jesus Christ and doing our part. I truly pray that the world would work this way as one body. I hope and pray that Kairos is always operating as one. We should never speak to or treat another person with anything but love, respect, and honor to build unity in the body of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (NIV)

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not

belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Personally, as a white woman, I can only imagine how our black brothers and sisters feel today as all this goes on. I hope we are positively reaching out to say we love you in the same ways we share our love as we serve in Kairos Weekends and Continuing Ministry. Maybe we need to be sure we are practicing Listen, Listen, Love, Love to each other every day, and not just when we are in a correctional facility or a Weekend. I pray we take this opportunity to see all people as equal, to listen, pray, and understand so our world can change and we can be a better united body of Christ.

We at Kairos need you! We need everyone, who are Christians, to carry out our mission working as one, honoring our differences and gifts God has given us to pour out His love on others. Let me close with *1 Corinthians 13:4-8* and remind us that Kairos is about sharing the transforming love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ to impact the hearts and lives of incarcerated men, women and youth, as well as their families, to become loving and productive citizens of their communities.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

With love,
Evelyn Lemly
CEO