

# COVID-19: The worst of the worst

By Michael Sanborn

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Now, more than ever, the world needs trustworthy reporting—but good journalism isn't free. Please support us by subscribing or making a contribution.

Courtesy photo

Catastrophe brings out the best in most Americans and the worst in others.

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Take televangelist Jim Bakker, for example. Bakker has been selling his followers his “Silver Solution” as a cure for coronavirus. A “natural health expert” on his streaming television show, The Jim Bakker Show told viewers that while his product hasn’t been tested on the COVID-19 strain of coronavirus, it had been tested on other strains and totally eliminated it in just 12 hours.

Silver Solution “has been proven by the government that it has the ability to kill every pathogen it has ever been tested on, including SARS and HIV,” the “expert” claimed. Four 4-ounce bottles could be yours, a message on the screen said, for just \$80. The product, colloidal silver, can actually be harmful. The state of New York ordered Bakker to stop selling it. Missouri is suing him. He has stopped selling it, no doubt in hopes that he won’t once again be convicted of fraud and once again become a prison inmate.

Beware of self-proclaimed Christians, like Bakker, who offer (for a price) salvation and a bottle of snake oil.

The Federal Trade Commission has warned nine Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) providers against "assisting and facilitating" illegal telemarketing and robocalls related to coronavirus. "Many of these calls rely upon consumer fear of the virus to perpetrate scams or sow disinformation," according to the FTC's website.

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Both the FTC and the U.S. Food & Drug Administration have warned seven companies, including

The Jim Bakker Show, for making similar fraudulent claims. Those other companies are: Vital Silver, Now, more than ever, the world needs trustworthy reporting but good journalism isn't free. Please support Quinessence Aromatherapy, Ltd., N-ergetics, GuruNanda, U.S. Vivify Holistic Clinic and Herbal Amy, LLC.

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According to AARP, as of last week, the FTC had received more than 25,400 consumer complaints related to the outbreak, including nearly 14,000 fraud complaints. Losses have totaled \$19.3 million, with a median loss of \$556. We already have a bevy of COVID-19-related self-protection restrictions. What's a couple more? Maybe, we shouldn't answer phone calls from numbers we don't recognize or open emails from people we don't know.

Criminals who try to take our money under false pretenses in times of crisis are among the worst of the worst in our society. Many will prey upon your faith in mankind and your faith in God.

Another phenomenon that comes with crisis is a search for someone to blame for our discomfort. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, then-President Franklin Roosevelt took the unprecedented “and unconstitutional” action of rounding up and moving American citizens into internment camps. Americans of Japanese descent “ 110,000 of them “ spent World War II in 10 camps throughout fly-over country. Nearly 1,900 died there, one in 10 from tuberculosis.

Racism was in full force. And, while we were also at war with Germany and Italy our government created no such camps for citizens of German or Italian descent. They were, after all, white.

Today, some Americans are revealing their ugliest side with Asian Americans being harassed and abused by citizens of their own country. Americans blame Asian Americans have been blamed by the ignorant among us for the current crisis and panic. They “ have been hated, spat upon and tormented. Many live in fear for their safety and for their children’s safety.

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Shame seems more appropriate than surprise. Those among us who would blame our fellow citizens for a pandemic for which they are clearly not responsible, or prey for profit upon the fearful. Now, more than ever, the world needs trustworthy reporting “ but good journalism isn’t free. Please support and gullible could still find their way into heaven “ because Hell won’t have them.

Michael Sanborn writes from Rapid City.

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