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TRUTH Magazine

Summer 2020 Edition

Trusting God in the eye of the storm

*Working Together to Advance the Grace of God
and Impact the World for Christ*



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TRUTH Magazine

Endeavoring to set forth God's purpose and grace according to 2 Timothy 1:8-11

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HAS OUR PURSUIT OF BEING RIGHT DIVIDED US?

by Matt Amundsen
Executive Director
Grace Gospel Fellowship

There is so much going on in our world. It would be more than appropriate to classify this as a severe understatement. Lives lost, families torn apart by the impact of COVID-19, and cities under siege because of the ongoing racial and cultural tension resulting from the senseless murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As we do with almost every situation that arises in our lives, we pursue understanding; why did this happen? Is it really as the media suggests? Is there a more significant manipulation going on? You have likely asked or heard these questions or ones quite similar.

Here is a question for you to ponder within: what was your first response to the killing of George Floyd? Were you skeptical? Did you immediately come out and defend the police officers? Were you saddened by what had occurred to Mr. Floyd and decide to pray for his family? Maybe a mixture of these questions? When there is something so jarring, we often run through the gamut of emotions as we wrestle with the totality of what has happened.

At the GGF we are known for our intense pursuit of the truth, rightly divided. The basis of this comes from Paul's letter to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:15) and is an essential passage for clearly understanding God's Word and what is written to us as opposed to for us. Additionally, many of our churches and ministries are named for the Bereans. "Now the Bereans were more noble-minded than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if these teachings were true" (Acts 17:11).

Our pursuit of truth has long been a hallmark of our churches, our pastors, and key lay leaders. In no way am I questioning our quest for truth. Instead, might I suggest that we reflect on our desire to be "right," which on occasion can be different from the "truth," which is grounded in God's Word. When we seek to be "right," our pride can often interfere, becoming our motivation for the pursuit.

I mean, we all desire to unveil information that will make clear the motives and intent behind

Even though in concept we understand that God is the judge, we have a tendency to take the matter into our own hands and cast approval or denial as though we are the final say

a situation. If an act of injustice happens, we often feel the need to investigate, perhaps because we do not trust the outlet that shares the news. Maybe they will only share some of the information, or possibly they will put their spin on the content. When we lack trust, we look elsewhere. Realistically that elsewhere tends to be within. We trust ourselves and our own experience to evaluate whether something is true. We might incorporate a verse from Scripture or merely a portion of a passage that seems to support our understandings.

Even though in concept we understand that God is the judge, we have a tendency to take the matter into our own hands and cast approval or denial as though we are the final say, or as though we are God's appointed judges for the current dispensation. This is dangerous, to say the least. Thankfully, we are relieved of that duty by God himself. Take a moment to read this

powerful reminder from Paul's letter to the church in Rome (especially unto the Jews but nonetheless a lesson for us today); *"You who call yourselves Jews are relying on God's law, and you boast about your special relationship with him. You know what he wants; you know what is right because you have been taught his law. You are convinced that you are a guide for the blind and a light for people who are lost in darkness. You think you can instruct the ignorant and teach children the ways of God. For you are certain that God's law gives you complete knowledge and truth. Well then, if you teach others, why don't you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but do you steal? You say it is wrong to commit adultery, but do you commit adultery? You condemn idolatry, but do you use items stolen from pagan temples? You are so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonor God by breaking it. No wonder the Scriptures say, 'The Gentiles blaspheme the name of God because of you'"* (Romans 2:17-24 NLT).



When you peel back the layers of this passage or even our propensity to "be right" there is a layer of fear residing just under the surface. When we pursue "rightness" we fear that which is different—could it be a perspective from a different culture? When we struggle to understand people and views that are different from ours, we may resort to a shallow effort to tear down and insert the position of comfort to which we are accustomed. But... what if we were to really listen and find that what others are saying is actually founded upon God's Word, regardless of how un-

comfortable it might be? Whether we are talking about the physical virus or the systemic viruses plaguing our country, it is paramount that we seek truth, and not merely "being right." You will notice in Paul's words to the Romans a critical tone. He acknowledges their basis in God's law but doesn't shy away from reminding them that its purpose was not for power over others.

Over the past number of months, I have wrestled with some of these issues

and the attitude of my own heart, especially when I have allowed news outlets to influence my thoughts. I am constantly in a mode of checking my motives and intentions, to see if they are grounded in truth or my desire to be right, which at the end of the day, is often determined within myself and my level of comfort and understanding, rather than God's word.

In fact, the issues are centered upon the racial tensions that exist in an area about which I am quite sensitive. Most of my life, if someone were to ask me, "Are you racist?" I would have responded with a firm "No!" I mean, I was raised in a home that valued human life, and that was instilled in me from early on. Seriously, I went on several mission trips and served in soup kitchens in the inner city; with my heart for people, how could I possibly be racist?

Ten years ago, my wife, Sharon, and I adopted

I am constantly in a mode of checking my motives and intentions, to see if they are grounded in truth or my desire to be right

our daughter, Kamea. Our boys were adopted through foster care, and the process was a blessing, yet we sensed that God was leading us to international adoption. Sharon's mother (Patty Cloud) and grandparents (Ernie and Hallie Green) spent considerable time on the mission field in Zaire/Congo, which was a motivation for us to adopt from Africa. When the paperwork was finalized, and we received the green light to travel to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, we stepped on that plane with excitement, but we were also naive about what was in the future, not just with our trip but with the years that would follow. Holding Kamea for the very first time was such an unreal feeling. It both seems like yesterday and yet so many years removed. I trust that when you held your child or grandchild for the very first time you also melted.

Fast forward to the last couple of years. Our daughter knows that she is different from most of the kids she is around, whether at school or church. She also knows that she is "fearfully and wonderfully made" in the "image of God." We rest in that confidence, and yet there is a different reality within our community and many communities across this country. Over the last ten years, as our family has journeyed as a unit that is diverse (not only with a child that is black but also one that is Latino and one that is Pacific Islander), we have to navigate waters that the average family does not. Our family is a beautiful mosaic, exquisite in many ways and yet complicated and messy in so many others. However, I would not have it any other way.

My heart is open wide, and my eyes see far more today than I ever would have had it not been for God leading us to adopt from Ethiopia. I am both grateful and discouraged. Grateful that we are part of her life and yet discouraged that it took adoption for us to

gain a higher sensitivity for the challenges our black brothers and sisters have faced and will undoubtedly continue to suffer if someone doesn't step up. Honestly, I have wondered and debated (within) as to what it would look like for me to be that someone. One of the ways I have chosen to step up is through conversation.

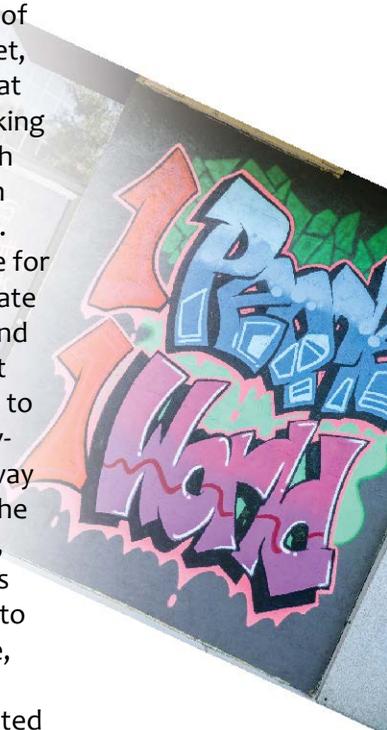
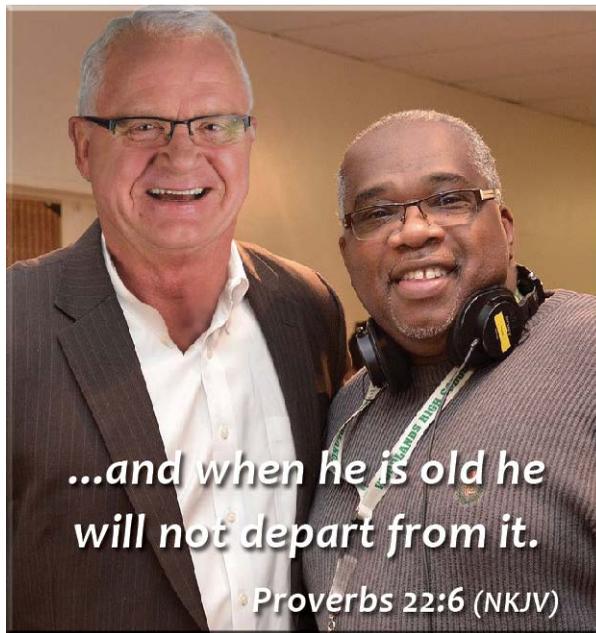
Some weeks back, after the riots in Grand Rapids, my son Levi and I visited downtown at the suggestion of our Youth Pastor, Mitch Connelly. Even though there was widespread damage to property, beautiful murals had been painted on the plywood that now covered broken windows and doors. The paintings were telling a story; one of pain and heartache and yet of hope. As we walked up and down the street, I could tell that my son was processing what he saw. I had no idea whether he was thinking angry thoughts or contemplating the depth of what happened here and what has been going on for years.

When it came time for lunch, we sat and ate our sandwiches, and yet I could tell that he was continuing to wrestle with everything. About halfway through his meal, he spoke up and said, "Dad, can we bless someone today?" to which I said, "Sure, Bud, what are you thinking?" He wanted to provide lunch for people walking by, so we did, which opened the door for a healthy conversation with

two black ladies about race, culture, and the power and truth of God's Word. While the first words we exchanged were a bit awkward, it was evident that God was doing something special with a young man's willingness to respond to the calling of the Lord.

I want to end with a passage of Scripture that often is used for marriage vows but also is where we will find our basis for the response; we are to give to a world that is clamoring for not only truth, but also love. Before we look

Our family is a beautiful mosaic, exquisite in many ways and yet complicated and messy in so many others. However, I would not have it any other way.



I had no idea whether he was thinking angry thoughts or contemplating the depth of what happened here and what has been going on for years.

Someone may come to Jesus because of the love you have modeled, and conversely, your absence of love will likely be a reason they walk away.

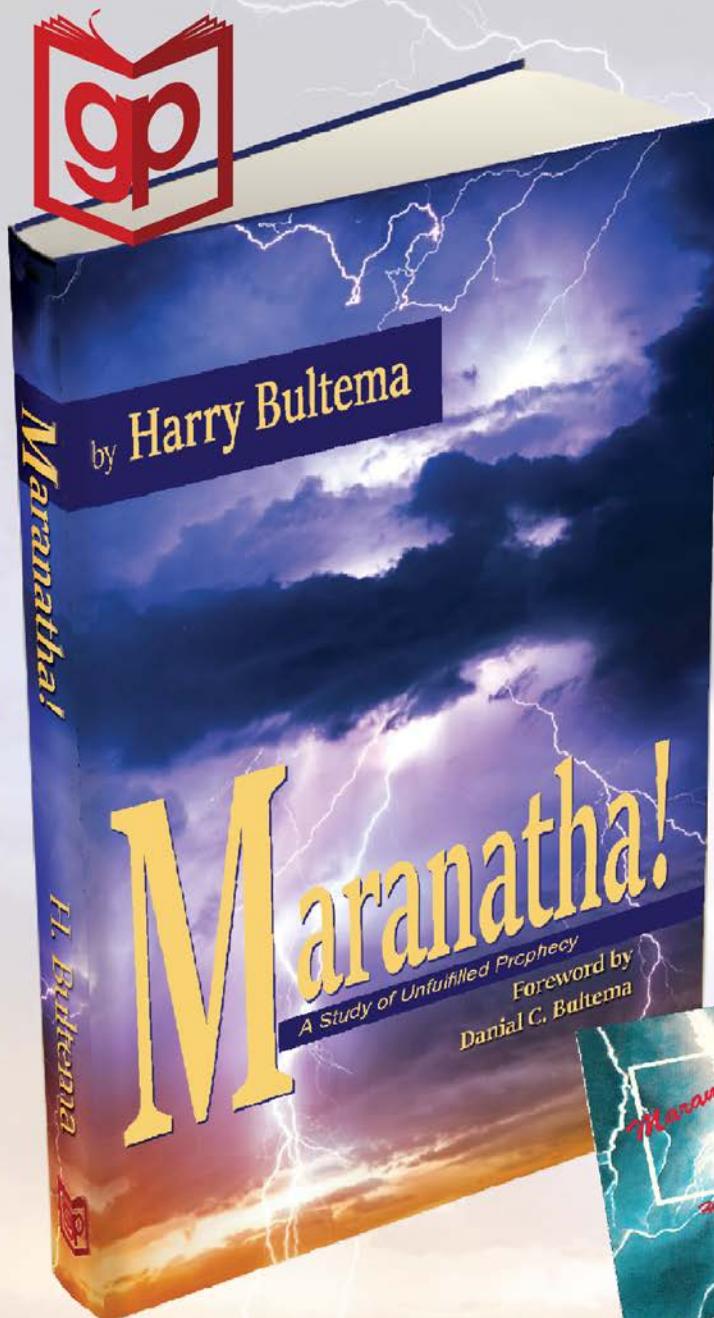
at the text, might I suggest that there is plenty of room for “Truth AND Love.”

“Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance...When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with

perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 11-13 NLT).

It is high time that people know of the deep love that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has, not only for those who will believe but for ALL humanity. Someone may come to Jesus because of the love you have modeled, and conversely, your absence of love will likely be a reason they walk away.

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Reaching the Goal



Reaching the Lost

by Jeremy Clark
Executive Director
Grace Ministries International

Upon entering the airport in Aruba—the island which GMI Missionary Carlos Brunk and I surveyed in February—health officials queried travelers as to whether they had visited Iran or China in the previous 14 days. Even without this new coronavirus, neither country would have been particularly appealing to the vast majority of visitors escaping the winter for a few days of warmth and fun in the Dutch Antilles. During those forty-eight hours surveying the island before visiting the GMI-affiliated ministries in Curacao and Bonaire, one conversation stood out from all the rest. As Carlos and I discussed the religious demographics of the island with a local pastor, the pastor noted that around five percent of the island’s population attended church. If it ever reached 10%, for him, it would be mission accomplished. The idea he was trying to convey was clear to us: we are fine and do not need any more help. The real message was even more apparent: 95% do not go to church, and a similar percentage, or even higher, do not know Christ as Savior. Aruba is a target field.

About a month later, China and Iran were not world governments’ only concerns. International and even domestic travel nearly any-

where for nearly any reason, became almost impossible. Then came the calls to shut down the economy. This begs the question: what does that even mean? Because of the fall, God implemented various merciful changes. Imminent death stands out as one of the most important. Imagine a world where we live in our sin, perpetually hurting ourselves, hurting others, and hurting God without end. Perhaps some might dare to muse, “tomorrow I will seek God,” but tomorrow, in a world of forever, never comes. Knowing that in an unknowable moment, death is everyone’s fate drives many to ponder what happens next and to make things right with the eternal God Who made us. In God’s mercy, He allowed for death.

Another merciful change is that to eat of the ground would be a toilsome endeavor (Genesis 3:17). Survival would take work. Several generations after Adam and Eve, humanity continued to look for the redemptive “Seed” of the woman (Genesis 3:15). When Noah came, the world hoped, “This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD has cursed” (Genesis 5:29). How could toil be

The real message was even more apparent: 95% do not go to church, and a similar percentage, or even higher, do not know Christ as Savior.

As human beings, nearly every decision we make is an attempt to better our position in life in the next moment, the next week, or in the years to come.

Over the last several months, we have all learned, or it has become tangibly evident to us, how interdependent we are socially and economically. Not only are we dependent on this interdependency, but our normal state is to expect normalcy.

merciful? When life is difficult, we need others. It allows us the opportunity to humbly recognize our plight and another chance to serve others in need. If life were to proceed without toil in our fallen state, there would be no need to depend on and help each other.

As human beings, nearly every decision we make is an attempt to better our position in life in the next moment, the next week, or in the years to come. Whether it is adjusting the pillow or buying a bigger home, we want, in our estimation, for our future situation to be better than what it is right now. This is the practical outworking of the economy.



Carlos & Denise Brunk at the radio station reaching the islands from their home on Bonaire.

Throughout human history, some have recognized the need or want of others and have created remedies or solutions to ease their discomfort or better their life. Likewise, the ones wanting the remedy or solution recognize the need or want of those who created it and trade goods or services for it. Both walk away from this transaction, believing they are better off now than they were before the interaction—otherwise, why consummate it? Through this process, the wealth of the world has increased, and our standard of living has improved. Consider the example of healthcare. Those with the intellect, desire, curiosity, and resources to alleviate the physical discomfort of others have developed treatments, vaccines, and cures. The many who want to take advantage of these provide such ingenious developers with that which likewise meets their needs and wants.

Regardless of the motive, these transactions realized to alleviate discomfort or improve life tend to draw people together, providing an opportunity to serve one another through love (Galatians 5:13). It would be foolish to think that everyone has a good heart and the

right motive when transacting with others. However, it is much more difficult to treat everyone around you with utter contempt when you ultimately depend on them for survival, to mitigate discomfort, and to improve your standard of living. Imagine a world where everyone was completely self-sufficient and able to act upon their wicked impulses with impunity and without regard to our relationships with anyone else. By allowing for toil, God again showed His mercy as it tends to bring people together, mitigating, to some degree, the destructive course of sin. God is patient, not wanting any to perish but desiring all men to know Him (2 Peter 3:9). Where there is life, there is hope (Ecclesiastes 9:4).

Shutting down an economy is happens when



human interaction is prohibited or significantly curbed. Over the last several months, we have all learned, or it has become tangibly evident to us, how inter-

dependent we are socially and economically. Not only are we dependent on this interdependency, but our normal state is to expect normalcy. At least in the short-term, we have certain expectations of how others will behave, how much we will make, what things will cost, and what we can purchase. For most of us, expecting normal enables us to thrive. Others are entrepreneurs and have a knack at anticipating what others are going to want or need in the months or years to come. For both the consumer and the entrepreneur, respectively, having a good idea of what normal will look like tomorrow and having the ability to gather the resources to provide what others might want at some point are impeded when human interaction is all of the sudden limited. In other words, life becomes that much more unpredictable and challenging to navigate in comparison to the way it used to be. In uncertain times like these, the temptation is to head to the basement, ride out the storm, and hope for normalcy when the clouds clear. Others

are proactively trying to better their lot and that of others around them despite this global uncertainty.

Ministry finds itself in a similar situation. Do we circle the wagons or push ahead? The trip to Aruba in February was part of Grace Ministries International's 10-year strategic plan, *Vision 2023*, adopted in 2013 to open eight new fields and recruit 26 new missionaries or missionary families to help expand ministries in established fields or join teams to open new fields. With the addition of Panama and Mozambique last year, GMI has opened five new fields since 2013 with others in our sights. The Lord has enabled us to make incredible progress towards these goals over these past seven years. In light of that, what if GMI were to communicate that we are putting all our plans, goals, and efforts on hold until things return to "normal" given all God has done to bless us? Such a proclamation would likely have a deflating effect on all of our stakeholders while we sit and wait for a return to the way things "used to be."

None of our missionaries left the field when governments restricted or stopped travel altogether. Instead, they all looked for opportunities to continue serving the Lord with the hand they were dealt. Having left their home in the largest city in Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, John and Naomi Caprari found themselves, along with their three young children, in the city of Mbeya where John conducted a nearly two-week-long conference teaching and challenging ten young men about missions and reaching unreached people groups in Africa. In Panama, Alvaro and Mauren Barrantes maintained their discipleship relationships with

six different university students online while

building relationships with neighbors in their community. The lockdown in Bolivia has been stricter and longer-lasting than in other parts of the world. In spite of that, Centro Bíblico de la Gracia (Grace Bible Center), has initiated a new ministry called *Ágora*. This is a series of seminars broadcast via Facebook live featuring guest speakers reflecting on different topics of interest with the purpose of sharing the message of Christ. For three long months, the team in Paraguay had been confined to their homes, but for infrequent visits to the grocery store. During this time, they maintained relationships with those in their ministry through their phones and technology. Fortunately, in mid-June, the government allowed for limited numbers to gather for church services and meetings. In Malawi, despite having to care for and protect their son J-Nathan who is at high risk because of the leukemia he is battling, Givemore Nyakamibiri continues to minister to and share the gospel with cancer patients and their families at the hospital in Lilongwe.

These are just a few examples of how our committed missionary team is not interested in waiting for better times. They want to serve



Alvaro Barrantes and family maintain their relationships with the people of Panama

None of our missionaries left the field when governments restricted or stopped travel altogether. Instead, they all looked for opportunities to continue serving the Lord with the hand they were dealt.



Frosty Hansen is able to continue his Bible classes working remotely on the internet



Cathy Hansen works one on one in her discipleship of Bolivian women

the Lord now, not content with waiting for a version of the way things were.

Even during this global crisis, we have been raising funds for the Tanzanian missionaries Method and Omelina Mwendapole so they can move from their ministry base in Mwanza, Tanzania, to nearby Burundi within the next couple of months. They will be joined by GMI missionaries Tom and Michelle Sanchez. Upon

arrival, this new missionary team will open Burundi as GMI's sixth new field.

The GMI Board gathered together in June to interview and accept another new missionary candidate, Aaron Cordero. Aaron became GMI's 11th international missionary candidate and our 18th new missionary overall since 2013. Assigned to Nicaragua, he will help this growing team disciple and train believers, share

the gospel and continue establishing the church plant in Nagarote with an eye towards other cities in Nicaragua and the target field of Honduras. Aaron, who grew up in the GMI-affiliated ministry in Costa Rica, completed the three-year missions training program at Grace Bible Institute and has short-term experience in various countries such as Uruguay, Bolivia, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Honduras gaining valuable experience in pursuit of his dream of becoming a missionary. Honduras would be another new GMI field as we pursue our Vision 2023 goals.

Towards the end of his life, the Apostle Paul had death on his mind. This wasn't all bad as he noted death is gain as his departure would mean being with Christ (Philippians 1:21-23). While in Roman custody, Paul anticipated his execution. Given the situation, he could have "shutdown" his ministry and just waited out the inevitable. Instead, Paul, wanting to be conformed to Christ's death, treated his demise as something of an achievable end as he pressed "toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:10, 14). Just a few years earlier, Paul's strategic plan included the goal of bringing

the gospel to Spain (which he likely never reached) while being sent there by the church in Rome, which he longed to visit (Romans 15:20-24). As if being chained and anticipating his death were not burdensome enough, once a highlight of his prolific teaching efforts (Acts 19:8-10), he lamented all Asia had abandoned him (2 Tim. 1:15). Now in Rome, though not arriving there on his own terms, he continued doing ministry. He sent letters, shared the gospel with those around him (Philippians 1:12-13), emboldened believers (Philippians 1:14), engaged those who were still with him, and sent yet others to do ministry (2 Timothy 4:11-12).

Imagine if he had decided to shut down his ministry during those final years instead of having fought the fight and having run the race pursuing the crown of righteousness to be given him by our Lord. I do not think we can imagine this because intuitively, we know how the story should end—the good guy scraps until his final breath.

Drawing from Paul's example, we too want to press on towards the goals which are ahead. We expect this of ourselves, and we trust that you would expect it of GMI as well. Much of governments' responses to this latest coronavirus have been ill-conceived due in part to this being a novel virus and a significant lack of a God-centered worldview. Regardless of how we got here, we all find ourselves in uncertain times. The only question left to answer is how we will respond both now and in the future.

TM



Aaron Cordero

Regardless of how we got here, we all find ourselves in uncertain times. The only question left to answer is how we will respond both now and in the future.

RACIAL

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UNREST AND

TENSION

TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY

CHRISTIANS

The event is embedded in our minds. Over and over again, we see the agonizing imagery of the slow, suffocating death of Mr. George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25. We see the graphic video of Floyd's neck under the weight of police officer Derek Chauvin's knee as three other police officers watched and rebuffed the pleas of Floyd and the bystanders calling out in an attempt to intervene on his behalf. With no desire to argue the innocence of Mr. Floyd, or the intent of the heart of Mr. Chauvin, what society has observed is, at the very least, gross negligence of duty or a terrible "execution" of responsibilities. It is also now a symbol of the racial tension and disparity in our American culture, which has become the catalyst for civil unrest, protests, riots, new legislation, and policy changes in organizations, as well as much-needed dialogue.

These events have caused divisions among Christians. Many can readily condemn the actions of that "bad police officer," taking solace in the fact that **they** would never do such a thing nor do they harbor prejudice toward people of color. In fact, they "love everyone." Some go one step further and jump on every available escape to find righteous sounding arguments which are based on the "hard-work-

by Ken Bruce Kemper, PhD.
President
Grace Christian University

ing American dream," declaring others are "entitled" and needing to "get to work." Others are deeply hurt by the pain of the realization that there is a societal problem which has value to discuss and understand. Still, they don't know where to begin, so they hurt and pray and may even express that sorrow to the people of color around them without any means to remedy the problem. Political parties, the media, and other groups (some quite radical) have sought to take advantage of the situation. Further commoditize the welfare of those already hurting and marginalized, such as many of the looters whose agenda is not the same as that of peaceful protesters desiring a voice and change.

Most of us who follow Christ have prayed for the families of those we know, as funerals have been public, and we have heard the name of God expressed by black leaders whose political rhetoric is quite different than our own. We may even question our own perspective, but inwardly we just move forward, hoping for a return to societal normal so as to not be further impacted.

With no desire to argue the innocence of Mr. Floyd, or the intent of the heart of Mr. Chauvin, what society has observed is, at the very least, gross negligence of duty or a terrible "execution" of responsibilities.

Where Racism and Sin All Began

It is a present reality, based on the created human condition that each person is miraculously made in the image of God (Psalm 139:13) and is capable of pleasing and evidencing God's likeness while at the same time being thoroughly sinful at birth (Psalm 51:5), self-centered, and easily influenced by evil in his thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

When considering the biblical explanation for the racial tension and injustices, we begin where the Bible begins. It is clear from Genesis 1 that God created a perfect world, and on the sixth day, the apex of all of creation was a human – male and female – in the image of God (*that man who was like God in so many ways very likely looked like a person from the Middle East, rather than a white European or a black African, most likely a different hue than we have imagined*). But the emphasis is never on the skin color, as God is Spirit and has no body or skin, and to be in His image is more intrinsically about what He's made of intellectually, socially, volitionally, and emotionally. Humanity as a whole and individually is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26, 27; 5:1-2). When Noah, his sons, and their wives exited the ark following the flood, there was clear instruction given to Noah that *"whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God has God made man"* (Genesis 9:6). The giving of this instruction is important, because it occurs hundreds of years after the fall of mankind into sin. Yet God emphasized to Noah that man is made in His image and therefore is incredibly valuable to God, even if fraught with sin.

More than 3000 years later, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans about the pervasiveness of sin. He stated, *"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned"* (Romans 5:12). It is a present reality, based on the created human condition that each person is miraculously made in the image of God (Psalm 139:13) and is capable of pleasing and evidencing God's likeness while at the same time being thoroughly sinful at birth (Psalm 51:5), self-centered, and easily influenced by evil in his thoughts, attitudes, and actions. The true state of our fallenness is seldom discussed in churches today. From the beginning, we see enmity in the Garden of Eden and the immediate effects of sin on man, including turmoil and disharmony. Man hides because he feels guilt within, man and woman blame each other, and there is disharmony between every part of God's creation which previously was perfect (Genesis 3:7-19). The overwhelming social, physical, emotional,

and spiritual disharmony that began in Eden escalates from that point onward. This is illustrated in the very next chapter of Genesis by the murder of Abel at the hands of his brother Cain. God pleads for Cain to beware of the clutches of sin and anger that plagued his heart. A few verses later, *"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time"* (Genesis 6:5).

The Corporate Reality of Sinful Mankind

We must not fail to see this biblical truth that is our reality yet today. Each person born into this world is corrupted by sin and is motivated toward self-satisfaction and selfishness and must be redeemed by God and reconciled by the blood of the Savior (Romans 3:23). The proliferation of sinful man naturally exacerbates this propensity, resulting in building structures and systems which perpetuate those innate characteristics. Man's best efforts to be "good" are isolated to smaller groups of God-followers (and a few moralists) in society. These people must overcome the prevailing flow of culture around them, working out the redeeming and reconciling work of Christ in and among them as the Holy Spirit reveals it. Sinners with a dominant propensity toward evil will make plans and attempt to disguise their evil motives as "good" for others (sounds like the serpent in Genesis 3?). In reality, they perpetuate and preserve their natural disposition first and foremost and will work toward selfish ends. We observe humanistic efforts in American society that attempt to bring about righteous ends. Still, without God's redemption of the individual and His reconciliation bringing different people together in the reality of their need of Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16), the efforts and outcomes only result in humanistic, fallen positions.

Fallen mankind comes up with ridiculous solutions to solve these deeply embedded problems, such as perpetrating violence on innocent store owners or eliminating any rules of order as well as those who are enforcing such societal rules. Others take this as an opportunity to speak out boldly against **any** societal construct, such as the family, marriage, binary sexuality, or human government. In doing so,

Others take this as an opportunity to speak out boldly against **any** societal construct, such as the family, marriage, binary sexuality, or human government.

they ignore God's design for the family and marriage. Within the family, principles of good and morality are to be taught, as well as instilling love and respect for all people regardless of ethnicity. Parents need to exemplify and teach that black lives do matter. But they need to understand and oppose the agenda of those who express (under a similar hashtag) that the nuclear family is the source of racism and evil.

Of course, we realize that things today are not as God designed them to be. The beauty of God's creation is marred and will one day be restored when Christ returns to establish His Kingdom. But until that time, the work of redemption and reconciliation continues and is entrusted to His Church, who are His ambassadors in this world. So, how do we behave and respond to the greater societal issues such as racism? Should we be sympathetic spectators or reconciling representatives?

Our Response to Racism

God is calling us toward nothing short of costly empathy and self-identification with fellow believers and fellow citizens. We do this by listening to their stories and their pain without bias or making a quick response. The rage and pain are easily missed if kept at a distance but are felt when we *listen to understand*. We should not only hurt with those who are hurting (Romans 12:15), but ask the Lord (Psalm 139:23-24) to show us how our lack of attention personally or corporately may have marginalized or divided others to be "outsiders."

In the book of Acts, we find believers living in community with one another, seeking to do the work of God. But Luke records that in the midst of this is a claim of ethnic bias: "...the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food" (Acts 6:1). At this point, the spiritual leaders could have told them, "it is only your perception," or to "take care of your own." But instead, they met, admitted the bias of their actions, then empowered new leaders from among the alienated population to be servers (deacons) to include and welcome freely the shared community (Acts 6:2-6). This is a biblical response worthy of emulating

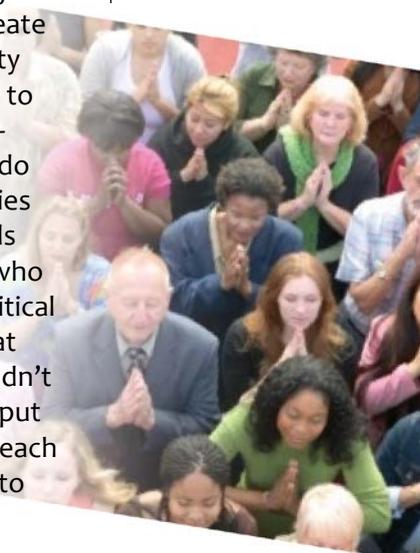
today; as a result, "the Word of God spread" (Acts 6:7).

The Church, the Body of Christ, is charged with an active role in the world today. It is not appropriate to passively point out that the world is hopelessly lost and that our eschatology shows we will be raptured from this evil world as a heavenly people. This is theologically true, but so are the powerful words of the Apostle Paul, that we are to be "*ministers of reconciliation*" (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). *This is our message* to more than merely what is said in our pulpits to people who are already saved. *It is our life* before those with whom we work, recreate with, live nearby, or have the opportunity to be around. We are God's instruments to bring about the badly needed reconciliation of God wherever God places us. To do this, we include and look for opportunities to express the love of Christ which, holds meaning for all others, including those who do not look like us or have the same political history as us. In so doing, we model what heaven will look like someday! We shouldn't fear a "social gospel" label as we never put aside the redeeming blood of Christ for each individual (2 Corinthians 5:21) as central to our message and actions.

Most certainly. We are people in the process. It can seem overwhelming to think about making a difference in long-established systems of thought or practices embedded in our society. But every journey begins with a single step, and every corporate good starts with the solitary attitude and action of one person. Synergy is established when more than one person comes alongside another and pulls in the same direction to effect a result. Will you be moved to be God's instrument of reconciliation today, motivated by godly love? Will you be inclusive and seek others who are compelled by that same love of God toward those marginalized by our human constructs of society? I pray for God to humbly move our hearts, minds, and bodies to be His messengers of reconciliation to a society torn by racial tension.

TM

So, how do we behave and respond to the greater societal issues such as racism? Should we be sympathetic spectators or reconciling representatives?



Will you be moved to be God's instrument of reconciliation today, motivated by godly love? Will you be inclusive and seek others who are compelled by that same love of God toward those marginalized by our human constructs of society?

“As we meticulously count coronavirus deaths, let us not forget the 50,000 people who die every day without an opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“We call these people unreached—those whom Paul was referencing in Romans 15:20, ‘It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation.’

“The purpose of TCM since our first missionary boarded a ship 63 years ago is to send missionaries to the foreign fields where people do not know that wonderful gospel of salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. TCM exists to change the eternal destiny of people from the lake of fire to heaven.”

~ Ben Anderson, International Director

**THINGS
TO COME
MISSION**



Leah
FROM BEREA

.. SO A DISPENSATION REPRESENTS GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MAN DURING UNIQUE ADMINISTRATIONS THROUGHOUT HISTORY? YES! BUT YOU HAVE TO DISCERN THEM WISELY..

LAME USE OF SCRIPTURE # 27 ...

I FIGURED SINCE YOU WERE "LAYING DOWN THE LAW" IT DIDN'T APPLY TO ME IN THIS DISPENSATION!



AND WHAT WILL COME OUT OF THIS?

¿Y QUÉ SALDRÁ DE ESTO?

by Angela Ortiz
Camp Caribe, PR

January 2020: Earthquakes in Puerto Rico.
March 2020: Isolation. Curfews. Little human contact. These are words that seem to stand out a lot these days. But thinking of all the current world events, I want to encourage you to choose to see God's hand above the chaos.

The creation of God is so amazing. During this time, technology has partly been an ally to communication. Last week this image was sent to my husband and me. It is from the home where my husband grew up. My dear mother-in-law has this plant in her backyard as part of her diverse garden. Each one has its history, but this one, in particular, is extremely interesting. This plant is one with a flower that germinates, sprouts, and gives a beautiful fragrance only at night.

Doesn't this make you think?

It is only when circumstances warrant that this plant bears new fruit.

Enero 2020: Terremotos en Puerto Rico.
Marzo 2020: Aislamiento. Toques de queda. Poco contacto Humano. Palabras que parecen resaltar mucho en estos días. Pero pensando en todos los acontecimientos mundiales actuales, queremos animarte a elegir ver la mano de Dios por encima del caos.



Curiosa la creación de Dios. En medio de este tiempo la tecnología en parte ha sido un aliado para comunicarnos. La semana pasada esta imagen nos fue enviada.

Es del hogar donde mi esposo se crió. Mi querida suegra tiene esta planta en su colección de diversas que tiene. Cada una cuenta con su historia pero está en particular es

su mente interesante. Esta planta es una cuya flor germina, brota y brinda un olor fragante solo en la noche.

Buscando más información me topé con esto en el internet:

“El arbusto...en sí mismo no es especialmente bonito, sino que más bien tiene un aspecto

This plant is one with a flower that germinates, sprouts, and gives a beautiful fragrance only at night.

Esta planta es una cuya flor germina, brota y brinda un olor fragante solo en la noche.

Perhaps this is the exact and precise season in your life that God is using so that a new praise that is fragrant to Him will blossom from your life.

Quizás está es la temporada exacta y precisa en tu vida la cual Dios está usando para que de ti brote, germine, florezca una nueva alabanza que sea de olor fragante a Él.

In the midst of this world crisis that we are going through: what fruit is it that God is trying to germinate in your life?

The fruit of patience? Joy? Obedience? Forgiveness?

Peace, love, kindness, humility?

Crisis reveals. Tests produce. "Feed your faith and your fears will starve to death." - J. Maxwell

Perhaps this is the exact and precise season in your life that God is using so that a new praise that is fragrant to Him will blossom from your life.

Take advantage of this quarantine. Stay at home. Season and deepen your relationship with the Lord:

- Dig deeper into your Bible reading times. Ask questions. Look for answers. Delight yourself in God.
- Deepen your obedience. For example, verses like Psalms 46:10 or Philippians 4: 8. Not only read them but live them.
- Deepen your praise to the Lord. Play music, write, or contemplate nature and lift your soul in living worship to God.
- Deepen your family time. If you say that this is your first ministry, now more than ever: be the church. Show it. Live it at home.
- Deepen the intention to serve others even if it is by text message or in person at a distance of 6 feet. Preach. Minister. Love.
- Take 1 or 2 hours a day off of social media to deepen your mental and emotional health care (which is in God's hands). Breathe, read, draw, put together a puzzle, etc.

In this time of waiting, my friend, understand that waiting for a believer is never passive, but proactive.

God is working! Exercise wisdom, take care, and deposit everything you feel in the Lord.

algo caótico y desordenado. No obstante, sus pequeñas flores...se caracterizan..."

¿No te hace pensar estos datos?

Solo cuando las circunstancias lo ameritan es que esta planta da nuevo fruto.

En medio de esta crisis mundial que estamos atravesando:

¿Qué fruto es el que Dios está tratando de germinar en tu vida?

¿El fruto de la paciencia? ¿O el gozo?

¿La obediencia? ¿El perdón?

¿Paz, amor, bondad, amabilidad, humildad?

Las crisis revelan. La prueba produce. "Alimenta tu fe y tus miedos se morirán de hambre." - J. Maxwell

Quizás esta es la temporada exacta y precisa en tu vida la cual Dios está usando para que de ti brote, germine, florezca una nueva alabanza que sea de olor fragante a Él.

Aprovecha y profundiza en estos días que tenemos que estar en nuestros hogares:

- Profundiza en tus tiempos de lectura Bíblica. Haz preguntas. Busca respuestas. Deléitate en Dios.
- Profundiza tu obediencia. Por ejemplo a versos como Salmos 46:10 o Filipenses 4:8. No solo leerlos sino vivirlos.
- Profundiza tu alabanza al Señor. Pon música, escribe o contempla la naturaleza y levanta tu alma en adoración viva a Dios.
- Profundiza tu tiempo en familia. Si dices que ese es tu primer ministerio, ahora más que nunca: sé la iglesia. Muéstralo.
- Profundiza la intencionalidad en servir al prójimo aun si es por mensaje de texto o en persona a distancia de 6 pies. Predica. Ministra. Ama.
- Toma 1 hora o 2 al día fuera de las redes sociales para profundizar el

He has been keeping you in perfect peace before, during, and when this pandemic ends. Put faith into action!

Meditate and dive into His Word today:

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find what pleases the Lord. Be very careful, then, how you live—not as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil (Ephesians 5: 1-2, 8-10, 15-16).

This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples (John 15: 8).

TM

Angela Ortiz is associated with Camp Caribe which is located on the southern coast of Puerto Rico and is the site of a year-round camp and retreat ministry that touches people from many parts of the island, a radio ministry, and a local church that has an AWANA program. In the past GMI missionaries were also involved in an after-school ministry and home Bible studies.

atender tu salud mental y emocional (que está en manos de Dios). Respira, lee, dibuja, arma un rompe cabezas, etc.

En éste tiempo de espera entiende amigo... que la espera de un creyente nunca es pasiva, sino Proactiva.

¡Dios está obrando! Ejerce sabiduría, cuídate y deposita todo lo que sientes al Señor.

Él te ha estado guardando en perfecta paz antes, durante y cuando termine ésta pandemia. ¡Pon la fe en acción!

Medita y Profundiza en esta Palabra hoy:

Por tanto, imiten a Dios, como hijos muy amados, y lleven una vida de amor, así como Cristo nos amó y se entregó por nosotros como ofrenda y sacrificio fragante para Dios... Porque ustedes antes eran oscuridad, pero ahora son luz en el Señor. Vivan como hijos de luz (el fruto de la luz consiste en toda bondad, justicia y verdad) y comprueben lo que agrada al Señor... Así que tengan cuidado de su manera de vivir. No vivan como necios, sino como sabios, aprovechando al máximo cada momento oportuno, porque los días son malos (Efesios 5:1-2, 8-10, 15-16).

Mi Padre es glorificado cuando ustedes dan mucho fruto y muestran así que son mis discípulos (Juan 15:8).

TM

He has been keeping you in perfect peace before, during, and when this pandemic ends. Put faith into action!

En éste tiempo de espera entiende amigo... que la espera de un creyente nunca es pasiva, sino Proactiva.



ONE MOMENT IN TIME

by Stephen F. Shober
Grace 4 You Ministries

33433

The “mystery” is a critical foundational truth of Scripture and belief of the Grace Gospel Fellowship (Eph. 3:2-11; Rom. 16:25; Col. 2:2). Grace 4 You Ministries, an affiliated ministry of the GGF, has published the book entitled, *God’s Secret and the Crisis of the Cross*. This book is designed to explain why the rulers of this world, including Satan, would not have crucified Christ had they known about the mystery.

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:7-8).

In the process of explaining the verses above, a fictional story is presented in the book. That story is reproduced here in condensed form. This imaginary story helps portray the most

significant event in human history, in a usual way, and explains why it was necessary for God to have a mystery (secret).

Imagine you had an experience similar to Daniel (Dan. 7:1, 9:21) in which you had a vivid dream while asleep one night. In that dream, you saw what appeared to be a giant video screen, and on that screen was a view of outer space. You could see two planet-like spheres in the distance, and they were moving around. One sphere was vibrant and lively looking, and one was drab and dead appearing. As you watched, you could see the spheres going all over the place but never came near each other. In fact, anytime they started approaching each other, they would dart off in the opposite direction. It was like they repelled each other.

You watched patiently at the incredible display, noting that the view kept getting closer

and closer to the spheres, as though you were in a spaceship traveling toward them. After watching for a considerable time, you noticed the screen had buttons near the bottom, buttons that allowed you to go forward and backward, slow motion, stop, pause, zoom in, and so on. Also, on the screen was a display that gave the year, month, day, and hour of the events being shown.

What was most impressive was the spheres' behavior, purposely avoiding each other at all times. The fact the spheres would dart away from each other when they got too close showed they were not following the known laws that operate in the universe. For the fun of it, you pushed the rewind button and watched for a while; the same pattern of behavior existed back in time. You pushed the fast rewind, and centuries fly by in seconds. Then, to your surprise, at some point in history, the spheres began to move toward each other and did not dart away; you watched intently for this was most unusual. You slowed the replay and observed that the spheres seemed to be on a collision course. You wondered if the spheres would touch and what would happen if they did. Just when it appeared they were about to touch, there was a black flash, and the screen went completely black; you could not see a thing. Shortly after that, the images on the screen reappeared, and the spheres were moving apart.

When you awoke, you realized this was a crazy dream, like most. But somehow, this one was different and you could remember every detail. You wondered if this dream was given to you by God, and that was confirmed the next night when the angel Gabriel came to you in your sleep. He told you he had been sent by God to explain this dream. He explained the vibrant, lively-looking sphere was the God sphere, and the drab, dead-looking sphere was the Satan sphere. Each sphere was full of gas, and each molecule of gas represented a concern for either God or Satan. Gabriel said, "That is why the spheres are mutually repellant; God's and Satan's concerns are not the same." This was great news and helped you understand the behavior of the spheres. So, you asked Gabriel, "Why, then, at one point in history did the spheres seem to come together, did they actually touch"? You mentioned

to him that if the spheres ever did touch, that would apparently mean God and Satan agreed on something, and you wondered how that could be. Gabriel nodded in agreement, but his appearance became very somber.

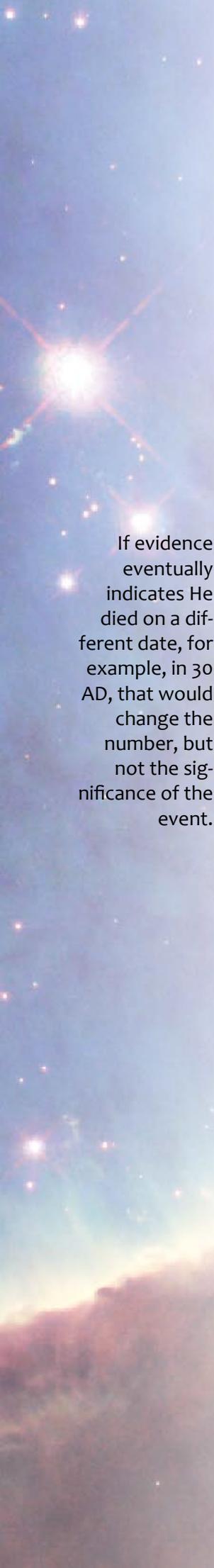
Gabriel explained that when two spheres touch, they touch at one specific point—the touchpoint. "The touchpoint will leave a mark on the spheres which will give the exact time of their touching," he noted. "Okay," you exclaimed, "Let's go back in time to the time when the black flash appeared on the screen." You could tell Gabriel knew precisely what you were talking about, and you further noticed Gabriel's attempts to smile were strained.

He pushes the fast rewind button, and time flew by as the screen showed the events going back in time. Centuries flew by, and as the time of interest approached, he slowed the playback, then the flash, Bam! By the time the rewind stopped, it was 20 AD. So, you knew the black flash was shortly after that, more recent in time. Gabriel began to move the view forward in slow motion; you could tell by how he managed the buttons he knew precisely when the flash occurred. Years went by, 21, 22, 23, 31, 32, and before you knew it, the black flash occurred. Gabriel stopped the playback at that exact moment; the screen was pitch black.

You looked at Gabriel and noticed he was in tears. "Why do you cry," you asked. Gabriel was so heartbroken he could no longer speak, but he did manage to point to the clock. You looked, but it meant nothing to you. So, he moved the view forward a few frames, to the time right after the black flash, The spheres were obviously flying apart. "But did they touch, if so, what does it mean?" you blurted out. A choked-up Gabriel motioned toward the touchpoint. Then, at this most critical time, when the truth was about to be revealed, he left. "Now what, when I need him most, he leaves," you thought.

So, if he wanted you to see the touchpoint, maybe you better check it out. You zoomed-in on the lively sphere and noticed a little red blotch at the touchpoint. You kept zooming-in, the blotch seems to contain numbers, and as the sphere turned, the first number you

Gabriel explained that when two spheres touch, they touch at one specific point—the touchpoint. "The touchpoint will leave a mark on the spheres which will give the exact time of their touching,"



If evidence eventually indicates He died on a different date, for example, in 30 AD, that would change the number, but not the significance of the event.

could see was 3, then another 3, then a 4, but what did they mean? By this time, your heart was racing, and your mind was going wild with anticipation. The truth was near; God’s purpose for the dreams was being revealed, but what was that truth? Then it dawned on you that those numbers were the same as on the clock, so you quickly read the clock. There you saw five unique numbers. As if hit by a bolt of lightning, all of a sudden, the numbers made sense; in fact, the whole dream made sense. Astoundingly, in a matter of seconds, you knew!

Upon awakening, the dream was etched into your mind. You now shared Gabriel’s tears because you understood the meaning of the dream. You realized at one moment in time the spheres actually did touch; at that moment, God and Satan were in agreement on one thing. You also realized how that was possible, and you knew the exact time the spheres touched. You also realized the black flash was three hours long.

The number on the clock and touchpoint was 33433.

“Wait,” you may say, “Whoever heard of 33433”? “If it were so important, why is it so unknown”? The number may be unknown, but what it represents is not.

The number 33433, is the exact date and time when the Lord Jesus Christ died on the Cross, that is, the year was 33 AD, the month was April (4), the 3rd day, and the time was 3 PM (ninth hour)

The number 33433 records in the memorable form, the Deathday of Jesus Christ. Undoubtedly the most significant event in human history. If evidence eventually indicates He died on a different date, for example, in 30 AD, that would change the number, but not the significance of the event. So, the exact number is not what is essential, but what it represents.

As the time approached “due time,” God and Satan agreed on one thing. They decided Christ had to die. While they agreed on the event, their reasonings were in total opposition. God pursued the death of Christ for reasons of holiness, justice, and righteousness, while Satan was there out of hatred, spite, and

a desire to kill Christ. Christ was there out of love for us; the world ruler were mere dupes. The touching spheres portray a physical event; if they were spiritual spheres, they would have been as far apart as possible because deep inside, spiritually, God and Satan were not in accord at all. God, Christ, and Satan had very different motives and intentions as the time of the Cross approached.

As the crucifixion approached, God and Satan agreed that Christ had to die. God and Christ were there out of love for us; Satan was there out of a rancid love of self.

If Satan and the rulers of this world had known that God had a mystery (secret), and how that mystery would change the world, they would not have crucified Christ. Satan and his hordes had no clue how Christ’s death would be used by God to reach out to the unsaved Gentiles in a new way, in an unheard of Age of Grace. The full accomplishments of His death were not revealed to them so that they would crucify Christ. His death was an absolute necessity for the payment of the sins of humanity. God had to keep the mystery hidden until after Christ’s death. Then, it was fully revealed to the Apostle Paul in the first century. We are the fortunate recipients of that mystery, “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33).

God’s Secret and the Crisis of the Cross is available for download from grace4you.com or in Kindle format or paperback from Amazon.com. **TM**

Another Shober book:

The Song of Solomon

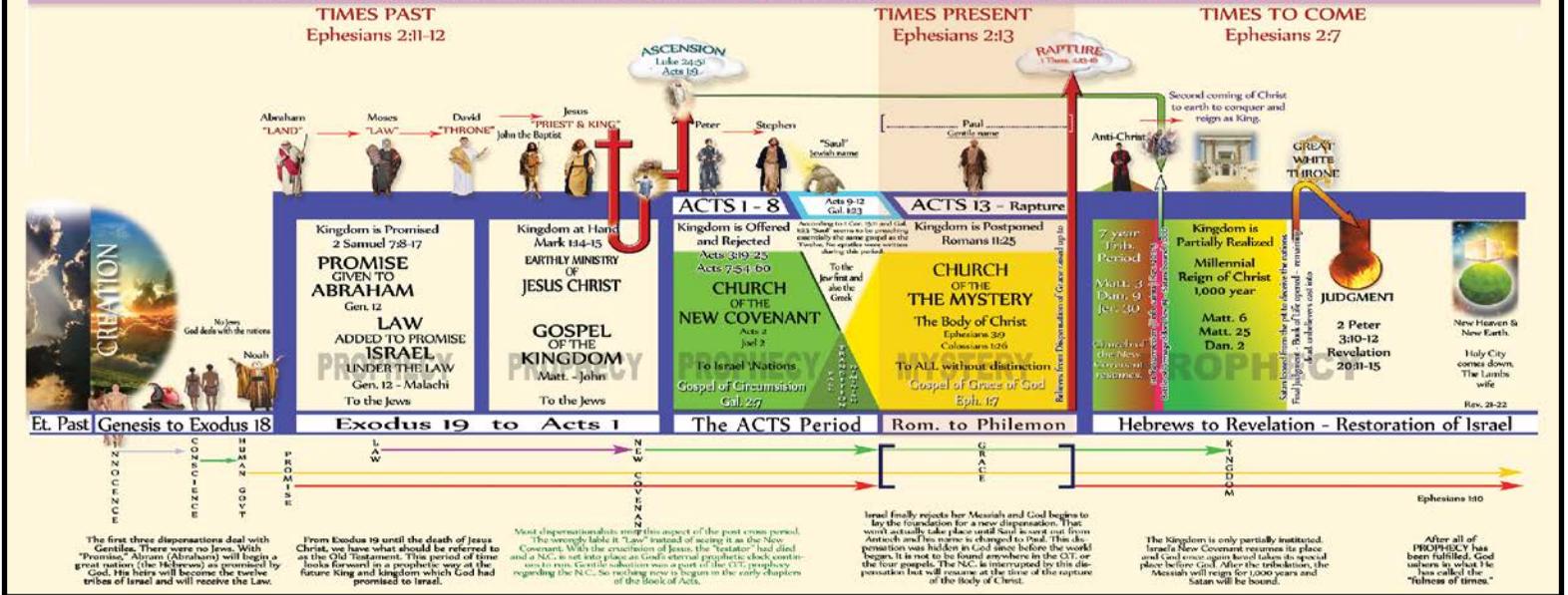
The subtitle to this book is *A Love Story with a Hidden Message*. So many today are taking these Old Testament books and applying the truth to the Body of Christ in the present dispensation. The author demonstrates the need to “rightly divide the Word of truth” and see that Song of Solomon is a love story between God and the nation of Israel.



This book is available on Amazon or buy direct from Grace Publications, Inc. for only \$8.95.

THE ETHERNAL PLAN OF GOD IN A DISPENSATIONAL SCHEME

THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THE ETERNAL GOD



(go to www.ggfusa.com/TruthMagazine for an expanded view.)

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE WORLD?

Every day it seems as though something else is rising to conquer us. Whether it is a devastating storm, a volcanic eruption, a war, or even a world-wide pandemic, the cries of "the end times" echo across the airwaves and throughout social media. All of the current events are readily found in the prophetic pages of the Book of the Revelation. And while that is undoubtedly true, a question must be asked and answered. When, since the first century, has that not been true? So why are there so many in fear of tomorrow?

For the religious world, the answer is quite clear. It does not approach the teachings of the Bible with a proper understanding of God's eternal purpose and plan. To put it in the language of the King James Version of 2 Timothy 2:15, they do not "... rightly divide the word of truth." The vast majority of preachers and academia are guilty of not "correctly handling" (NIV) God's word. If that is true of them, then what is true of the average person in the pew? It is certain that the Covenant Theologian will mix God's dealings for Israel with His program for the Body of Christ. Replacement theology is just one example of this. Perhaps you have heard the old children's church song, "Every Promise of the Book is mine. Every chapter, every verse, and every line." It sounds good, but then verse two would have to be, "Every curse of the book is

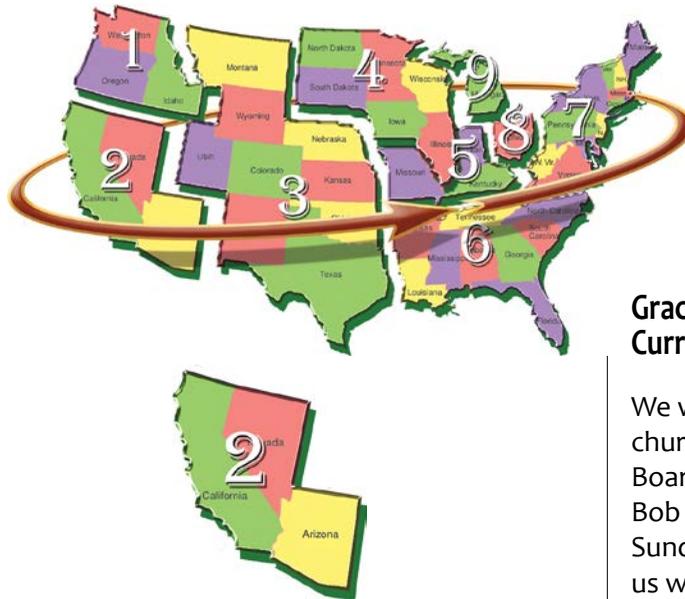
mine. Every chapter, every verse, and every line." However, even the majority of dispensationalists will do the same. They will preach a pretribulational rapture of the church and then go to the book of Matthew as a proof text, seemingly unaware that the passage in Matthew is a reference to the Second Coming of the Messiah as promised to Israel.

As members of the Grace Movement, we have always endeavored to distinguish between Israel and the Church. O'Hair, Stam, Baker, and others saw that difference and burned with a desire to make it known (Eph. 3:9). The Apostle Paul told Timothy to hold to the truth of the faith, for there would come a time when people will not endure it (2 Tim. 4:3).

The chart above is but one example of the eternal redemptive plan of God. It highlights events, individuals, and key Scriptures that pertain to particular dispensations. While no chart is without error or verbally inspired of God, it should serve as a great place to begin a personal study of God's Word and see, as Mr. Stam wrote, "Things that Differ."

Get into His Word and see the true glory of God's GRACE in the dispensation of GRACE. Be able to defend the faith with uncompromised clarity. "Study to show yourself approved unto God..." (2 Tim. 2:15). **TM**

The vast majority of preachers and academia are guilty of not "correctly handling" (NIV) God's word. If that is true of them, then what is true of the average person in the pew?



REGIONAL NEWS FROM AROUND THE GRACE GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP

Grace Community Church (Prunedale, CA) Pastor Bill Hardman

Grace Community Church (Prunedale, California) was a little slow getting worship services online when in-person services ceased. We are grateful for the help of several techies in our church family and we got our worship music and sermons uploaded individually to Facebook. On June 7 we had our first in-person Facebook-live service outdoors. Attendance was 55, slightly more than expected including two new guests and one gopher. Pastor Bill sends out a devotional reading and meditation to everyone in the church family and others who gradually have joined us. In March, seven volunteers agreed to call several families each week to check on how they were doing and if they needed anything. Pastor Bill and Millie also did a few social distancing visits from people's porches or driveways. Each week as we worshipped online, we all grew in our eagerness to get back together and be with each other face to face, even behind masks. We plan to worship outdoors through much of the summer while the weather here allows us to do so and continue our online presence. Ephesians 3:20 says, "Immeasurably more than we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory!" We are also grateful to God that thus far no one in or connected with our church family has tested positive for COVID-19. We pray that God will continue to help us reach out to anyone, anywhere, who wants to hear the good news of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Grace Bible Church (Anaheim, CA) Currently no pastor

We were very much taken aback when live church services were cancelled. Our church Board Chairman and Sunday school teacher, Bob Williams, filled the pulpit for the last three Sundays in February. The GGF then supplied us with Pastors Tim Heath and Gary Cloud to alternate as interim pastors with Joe Tusant from Riverside GBC for the 1st of March. Pastor Tim came after that and preached on March 8th and then, of course, everything got shut down by Covid-19. We were unable to do any streaming. So some of us found solace in streaming Pastor Joel's service from Prior Lake, Minnesota, at 8:30am and then at 10:30am Pastor Josh White's service from Phoenix, in our homes. It was very uplifting to be able to do that. We were very happy to be able to be back in our own sanctuary on June 7 with Pastor Tim preaching again and then our own Bob Williams. We are very thankful to the GGF for helping to supply men to minister to us while we search for a permanent pastor.



Grace Bible Church of Lakewood (Lakewood, CO): (Pastors Harl Hargett and Mark Smith)

For nearly 75 years Grace Bible Church of Lakewood has done active ministry, seeing many grow into the truth of dispensational theology. It is with deep sorrow that our congregation must now close this chapter of testimony and be dispersed into other avenues with

peace in our hearts. We hope for that grand reunion in heaven now with all of our brethren.

Harvest Fellowship (Brighton, CO): Pastors Steve Blackwell and Bob Hill

We have been meeting for several weeks as a church, but numbers are down. We have been broadcasting our service on Facebook and YouTube and will continue to do so indefinitely, since many still believe it is unsafe for them, as well as others having compromised health. Such a blessing as our shut-ins now have an avenue to worship with us. But it is great to see and talk with a majority of our people! When you read this, our TNT fireworks youth fundraiser will have taken place. Our goal was \$50,000. PTL, we raised \$78,016. It helps with summer camp costs and activities throughout the year, along with supporting five ministry interns this coming year serving in and outside the church.

We, at Harvest, are hurting for GBC of Lakewood, Colorado, closing their doors. Please pray for Harl, Carolyn Hargett, and Mark Smith as they move forward into the next phase of their lives.



Grace Bible Church (West Allis, WI) Pastor Les Takkinen & Pastor Mark Kiel

It is summer in Wisconsin and after three months of no morning services in our church, we are finally enjoying worship, fellowship, and even hugs. It has been very different and very difficult for most of us in our communities as it has been all over the world. We are growing in our faith and standing upon the Word of God during these unusual times from the hand of God.

God has allowed us to tape our morning messages on Saturdays so that our congregation could watch them on Sunday mornings during the first months of COVID-19. "GBChurch Updates" were sent out biweekly with the goal of striving to encourage the people, as well as informing them of any changes in what is happening in our church.

A drastic change has come about during the lull in the use of the church building for services or Bible studies. We have made incredible changes in our sound and multimedia ministry equipment. We have poured thousands of dollars into those ministries as we had planned before the "shutdown" period. We thank God for the funds, the manpower, and the wisdom during this time.

May God heal our communities, our nation, and our world from this pandemic, as well as the chaos and violence in the U.S.A. May we all pray that God will guide us as believers in Jesus Christ to share Christ and Him crucified to our needy world!



Faith Bible Church (Olney, IL) Pastor Zachary M. Slater

The last few months have been very different than we have witnessed in our lifetimes. But through the changes, loss, and worry we see light. Through our access to the Internet, computers, fancy sound systems, smartphones, and yes, even the good ol' postal system, God has shined through His people. We have been unable to meet in person here at FBC but even through that change our connections grew. Many more listened to the morning sermon than usually do, hundreds more at times. People sent cards and letters to each other and phone trees were enacted to stay in touch, mailers were given to normal attendees with a sermon printed for those who couldn't listen online. We witnessed prayer requests shared more than ever before. One unique light we witnessed is that some were viewing many Grace sermons from all over the world each week, because of the newfound availability, building their spiritual knowledge and relationship with God in a way they never could have before. We are looking forward to in-person meetings in this month with great anticipation, but we cannot ignore what the Lord has accomplished during these past few months.

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Cast all your anxiety
on *Him*
because *He* cares for *You.*

1 Peter 5:7

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