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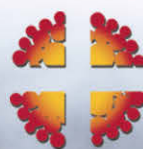
TRUTH Magazine

Fall 2020 Edition

*For since the creation of the world God's
visible qualities - His eternal power
and divine nature - have been clearly seen...*

Romans 1:20a

Working Together to Advance the Grace of God
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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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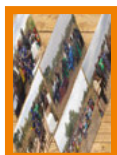


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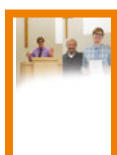


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ENCOURAGEMENT & HUMILITY IN ANAHEIM

by Matt Amundsen
Executive Director
Grace Gospel Fellowship

Cautious optimism! That is the appropriate phrase to use when describing the forecast for our churches in the midst of a pandemic and the political tensions that continue to permeate our thoughts and conversations. Recently, a group of leaders and I traveled to Southern California to meet with area pastors and church leaders to encourage and journey together towards greater health and vibrancy. I want to introduce to you our team, which consists of Pastors Brent Befus (Minnesota), Mitch Connelly (Michigan), and Mark Smith (Colorado). Upon arrival, we grabbed a quick bite to eat and got down to work. While there would be other stops along the way, our first stop (and the one we will be focusing on for the sake of this article) was at Grace Bible Church of Anaheim, California. We were there to evaluate the facility and facilitate a discussion regarding the values and identity of the ministry. The Anaheim church is a faithful church body that has been meeting for over 50 years. A little-known tidbit about the church is that GBC Anaheim got its start on the grounds of the early days at Knott's Berry Farm, which is

now a famous amusement park in Buena Park. The Lord has powerfully used men and women of willingness to impact the community for His glory throughout the years!

It was a warm but mostly clear evening with a layer of smoky haze blanketing the region due to the devastating forest fires in the mountains to the east. The meeting began with a delicious meal and a few laughs as we got to know each other. Pastor Mark Smith started the discussion and had each member share what the church meant to them and describe how they were each involved. It was evident that God's Word was central, and the impact that the gospel had on them, in addition to the closeness they shared as a local family, would be a consistent theme. It was undoubtedly refreshing to hear of the legacy the Lord continues to cultivate. An important aspect of our time together was to share some constructive thoughts we had regarding their facility. Included in our discussion was the first impressions we had as we drove up and then walked around. Pastor Mark, in addition to being a pastor, has a wealth of experience in

It was evident that God's Word was central, and the impact that the gospel had on them, in addition to the closeness they shared as a local family, would be a consistent theme.

Humility is a lost art or attribute in our society today and often pushed to the side in favor of “standing firm” or “being right”...

the building and construction field. He was able to share his views on what he saw with a level of credibility that I certainly don’t bring to the table. The folks received our perspective with humility, and that was the main attribute we were hoping for, not only in how they responded but also in how our time together would proceed.



Robert and Matt getting ready to grill.

Still, his example of humility and putting the needs of others is the most incredible and most powerful testimony ever lived. Bob’s step that night communicated that the ministry of GBC Anaheim is about God, not about the individuals that lead it.

Humility is a lost art or attribute in our society today and often pushed to the side in favor of “standing firm” or “being right” and yet halfway through the meeting came a breakthrough moment. I introduce to you Bob Williams. Bob has served faithfully as an elder at GBC Anaheim and has found it challenging to navigate the difficult waters of transitioning from pastor to pastor. He was meanwhile partnering with the Grace Gospel Fellowship to revitalize and learn from the past in hopes of moving forward and impacting the community for Jesus Christ. Independence and autonomy reside in many of our churches and have long been a hallmark of our fellowship. This “value” isn’t merely applicable to a church but can also be true of us as individuals. Bob, like myself, has ideas of how things could or should be done, whether it comes to life or ministry, and at times we can probably be stubborn. Hopefully, he would agree with me – otherwise, I may owe him another chocolate bar. Getting back to our meeting, what happened in

the middle of our conversation would transform our connection with each other. Ideas were being bandied about and there was a multitude of comments being interjected. We discussed different uses for the facility and property, of which the notion of a garden or dog park was suggested, and Bob made a sarcastic comment in disagreement. A moment or two passed by when he suddenly stood up. We were unsure if Bob was frustrated with the conversation or what his next move would be. Walking over to Pastor Mark, he proceeded to apologize for his words of sarcasm. He sensed by the leading of the Holy Spirit that his comment was not beneficial nor uplifting. It caught us off guard and yet it was by far the most refreshing aspect of our time together. We didn’t expect him to do it, and nevertheless, he humbled himself in a way that Christ modeled in his earthly ministry, especially in his obedience, even to death on a cross. Jesus never sinned and never needed forgiveness as we do. Still, his example of humility and putting the needs of others first is the most incredible and most powerful testimony ever lived. Bob’s step that night communicated that the ministry of GBC Anaheim is about God, not about the individuals that lead it. That was powerful to me and our group and I trust was meaningful to the other leaders. If our churches are to grow and have an impact, we must start with a Christlike humility that sets aside self for the needs of others. Above all, it must be for the sake of the gospel.



They love to eat the street food

It was a beautiful night that we did not want to see come to an end. Our prayer is that what took place will be the catalyst for this church and our partnership with them to flourish so that the community will seek the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

I share this because humility is such a foreign concept. It is far easier to serve ourselves and forget about the well-being of our neighbors. We see it in politics and unfortunately we see it in our churches. I find as I read God's Word there is little room for arrogance and pride. However, we continue to see it being so prevalent and accepted.

When it is acknowledged, whether as a church board or on an individual basis, that we are not as healthy as we desire, it is a challenging and at times, excruciating realization. With this understanding, we have an opportunity. We can stuff it and ignore the "elephant in the room," or we can face it head on and begin to journey through peeling back the layers. Part of these layers will be enjoyable as we reflect on the seasons of growth and excitement. Some of the layers will be painful due to loss or perceived failure. Furthermore, there will likely be even more layers in the middle that often are mundane and "everyday feeling" that carry no unique flavor or emotion. All of these layers are important to acknowledge if we are to move forward. We can't merely handpick the positive and leave out the pain. We must recognize that all of it has played into where we stand today. It doesn't mean that we have to hold on to these layers, but we learn and grow from them SO THAT we can powerfully impact the world around us with the gospel of God's grace, impacting life after life for Jesus Christ and His glory!

I share this update and, more importantly, the heart and discovery of a faithful man because that is exactly where we find ourselves. We may not like a "new" idea or concept for church min-



The GBC Anaheim ministry team together at our last stop.

istry, but let us dig deeper and allow for the Holy Spirit to be our guide, not our inner self, and the comfort levels with which we are so comfortably comfortable.

Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Anaheim as they make necessary decisions, and also for our brothers and sisters throughout the world. Together we will navigate the problematic waters of revitalization!

If you would like to partner with us through your prayers, please do!

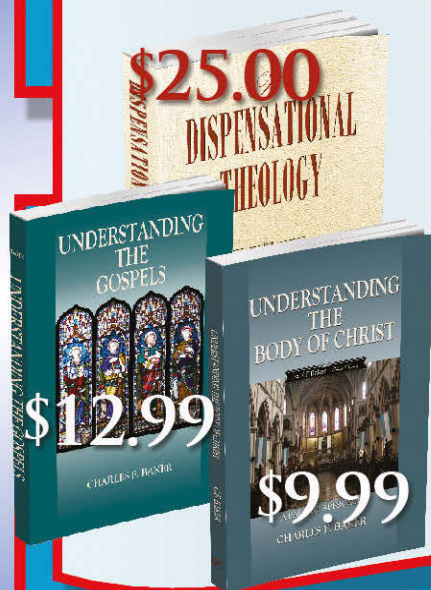
If you would also like to support the efforts in churches like GBC Anaheim, please check out our website at www.ggfusa.org/donate/ Blessings! **TM**

When it is acknowledged, whether as a church board or on an individual basis, that we are not as healthy as we desire, it is a challenging and at times, excruciating realization.

With all that is happening in our country, we must keep our churches and staffs in our prayers. Many are confronted by events and situations which they have never before experienced. While in some ways, the pandemic has opened new doors of ministry opportunities, it has also negatively affected so many lives. Let us pray for strength and open doors.



Rapture vs Second Coming Harbingers of the End Times Storms, Diseases, Social Unrest



Books are being sold and pulpits are filled with those who are predicting that we are living in the prophesied last days. But are they correct? What signs are we looking for today? When we learn to "rightly divide the word of truth," we understand just what is happening. Don't be taken in by the hype. Get one of these books and discover the truth.

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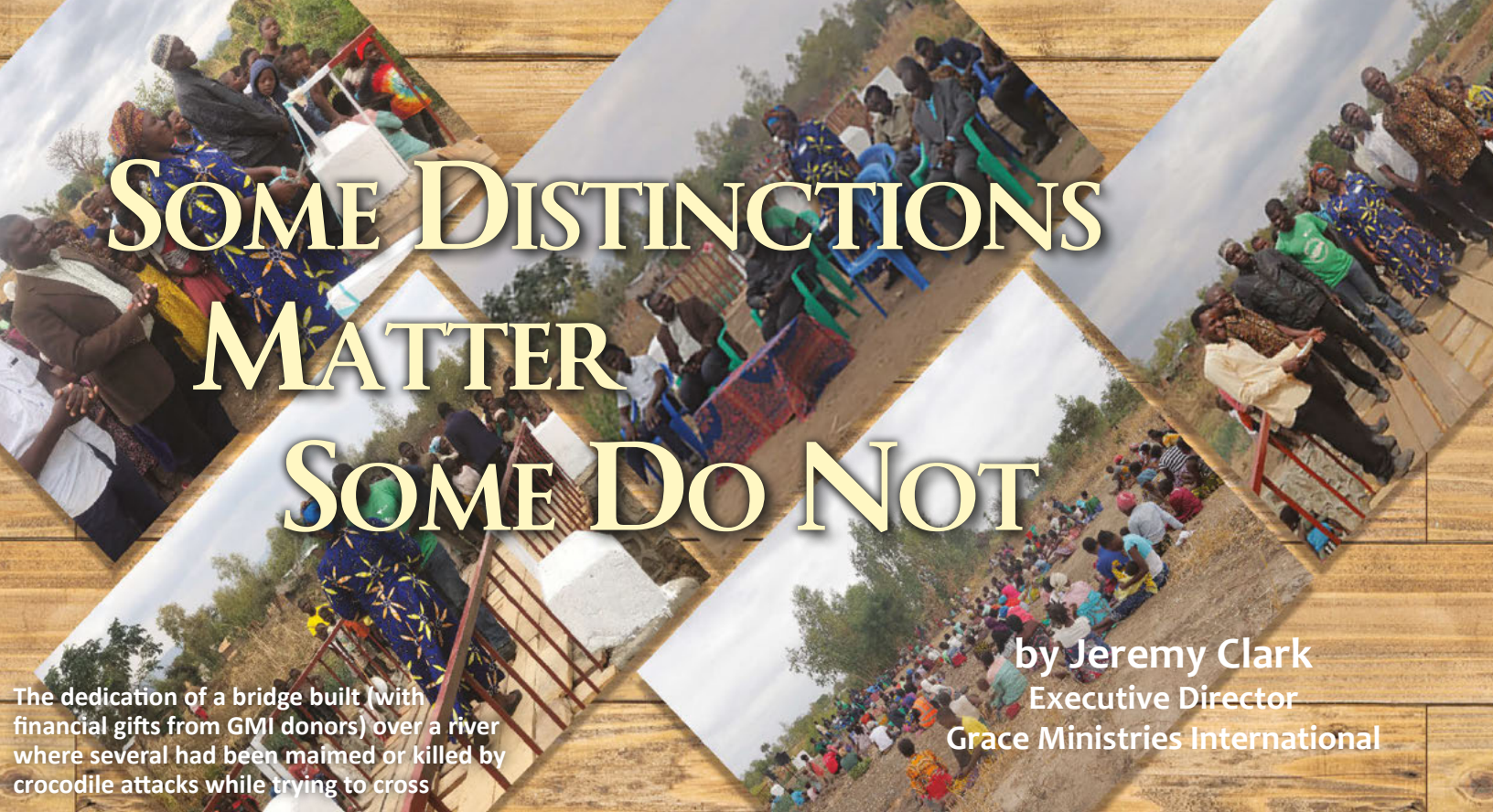


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**THINGS
TO COME
MISSION**

with
Pastor DEAN PADAYHAG
TCM Missionary
serving in South Africa



SOME DISTINCTIONS MATTER SOME DO NOT

by Jeremy Clark
Executive Director
Grace Ministries International

The dedication of a bridge built (with financial gifts from GMI donors) over a river where several had been maimed or killed by crocodile attacks while trying to cross

Taken back, I looked around the business's full waiting room to see if anyone else would react to the passing comment I had just heard on the Costa Rica evening news. The anchor described a man with "ojos chinos" (Chinese eyes). I questioned what I heard until I read the same description on the TV screen. Costa Ricans are a peace-loving bunch and do not go out of their way to look for a fight. From my cultural perspective, that is why I was a little surprised. Growing up in the States, society conditioned me to avoid describing the physical features of others that could be construed as stereotypical of one's race, which would be, at best, impolite. However, as is common throughout much of the world, noting differences between people's appearances is not that big of a deal in Costa Rica and is not intended to be derogatory. As I thought through this difference between my home and host culture, I realized the obvious: there is nothing intrinsically immoral about noting distinctions between people. After all, didn't God create us this way?

Though God saved Noah and his immediate family from the global flood, it did not take long for him to sin against the Lord. In faith, Noah feared God and built the ark (Hebrews 11:7) but, similar to us who have experienced God's mercy through the cross, Noah rebelled against Him (Genesis 9:21) getting drunk, which led to other sins and enduring consequences. Likewise,

humanity was not long removed from the flood when it corporately decided to disobey God's command to fill the earth (Genesis 9:1, 7). Not wanting to be separated, men who found their way to the plain of Shinar began to build a tower so they would not "be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:3-4). Understanding their hearts and their potential to do greater evil collectively, God would not be frustrated by their machinations and scattered humans throughout the world, confusing their language (Genesis 11:6-9).

People groups and nations formed from Noah's lineage in accordance with the new geographic, familial, and linguistic distinctions. God's reordering of human society also demonstrated His mercy. From the beginning, He devolved upon man authority over the creation and, ultimately, over other men (Genesis 1:28, 9:6). Imagine if all that authority were vested in those same people who blatantly wanted to violate God's command to fill the earth by building a tower to heaven while making a name for themselves? Instead, by creating multiple nations, perhaps some would retain their knowledge of the Lord and seek to do His will. Nonetheless, most did not (Romans 1:28). For those nations which practiced evil, God could easily call one nation to punish another. After all, He has authorized nations to bear the sword to execute His wrath (Romans 13:4, Leviticus 26:25).

Growing up in the States, society conditioned me to avoid describing the physical features of others that could be construed as stereotypical of one's race, which would be, at best, impolite.

As man has reconnected on a global scale in the past several centuries, we can observe the diverse, genetic creativity God had initially programmed into Adam and Eve and which was still evident in Noah and his family.

Another result of this reordering is that God shed some light on His creativity. As humans began to populate these new areas of the earth to which God brought them, certain genetic traits pervaded the various populations of these now separate people groups. As man has reconnected on a global scale in the past several centuries, we can observe the diverse, genetic creativity God had initially programmed into Adam and Eve and which was still evident in Noah and his family.

Everywhere we look, He makes known His grandeur, brilliance, wisdom, and love. The closer we look, the more we discover yet tinier building blocks of the material world which, in God's wisdom, He made to interact perfectly with the non-physical world of ideas, logic, and emotions. While man can make relatively simple machines, we cannot even hypothetically design a human conscience or mind, let alone have them bridge

creativity—human genetic diversity—making it into a justification for ungodly hatred. For the godless, there is little to restrain their derision of those who look different than they. For example, the title and subtitle of Charles Darwin's famous work is "Origin of the Species: Preservation of the Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life." Which ones did he think were favored? Would it matter? However, some Christians also attempted to justify their hatred of others, arguing that slavery, built upon the wicked foundation of the capital crime of kidnapping, was biblical while also denying the personhood of those they deemed mere property. Those who deny God cannot appeal to an absolute, objective moral code to reject hatred based on race. Without God, morals are relative and subjective. Christians, however, have God's Word, which instructs us to do just the opposite—to value others because they were created in God's image (Genesis 9:6). This unique value is

why Christians were justified to condemn others within Christendom while leading the way to undo the evil of slavery.

The sin of racism is just one manifestation of a more fundamental and overarching lust. Isaiah records Satan's thoughts at his fall: "For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High'" (Isaiah 14:13-14). Acting upon his desire

to be like the Lord Himself, he recruited both angels and men to join his rebellion against God. Satan, a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44), ultimately worked through Judas (John 13:2, 27), who was a principal accomplice to Christ's cruel death on the cross. As audacious as it was, Satan pitted Himself against the Godhead, enlisted others to join him, and ultimately sought to kill in pursuit of his lust. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit created and were God while Satan and all other beings belonged to the class of those who were created. Satan, in his pride, not only noted this distinction but, because of it, initiated a war against the Godhead, numbering many souls as casualties.



John Caprari and a group of Tanzanians who work to reach those who do not God.

...some Christians also attempted to justify their hatred of others, arguing that slavery, built upon the wicked foundation of the capital crime of kidnapping, was biblical while also denying the personhood of those they deemed mere property.

the gulf between the physical and non-physical worlds. There is a part of us that will inevitably wear out and die while another part, the non-material part, which lives forever. Likewise, the further we peer beyond the earth, the smaller we seem, and the greater God's love appears that He would become as diminutive as we in order to die in our place giving us the opportunity to live with Him eternally.

Like humans have done with so much of God's revealed and created order, we have distorted what should be a testament to His profound

Following Satan's pattern of rebellion, human beings have made numerous distinctions between themselves and others as a justification to lift one group up while devaluing, harming, or even destroying another. Not wanting to be alone in our sin or numerically inferior, we recruit others to join us. If misery loves company, so does sin. Consider some of the delineations we have made: poor and rich, those possessing resources and those without, the able and disabled, healthy and unhealthy, powerful and weak, born and unborn, young and old, convenient and inconvenient, wanted and unwanted. As with any fleshly desire, when it "has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1:15). The small sample size of just the last century informs us that this resulting death is not only spiritual but physical as well.

On my first trip to Africa in 2013, I first arrived in Kigali, Rwanda, before traveling to Congo a couple of days later. There I visited the Kigali Genocide Memorial, which conveys story after story of the horrendous slaughter of those of the Tutsi tribe by the Hutus. Two hundred and fifty thousand Tutsi remains, representing less than half of those killed, rest at the site of the memorial. In Rwanda, sin was conceived; it was born, matured, and led to the death of hundreds of thousands as one group noted a distinction and used it to justify their hatred.

One distinction that does matter is the difference between those who will spend the rest of eternity with Jesus Christ and those who will not. Interestingly, God chooses to work through the Body of Christ comprised of very distinct groups: Jews and those from the rest of the nations, the Roman and the barbarian, the slave and free, male and female (1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11). He uses this body to reach as many as would believe the gospel. It is a body made up of many groups that could and, unfortunately, has allowed its distinctions to serve as a sinful basis to divide, impeding its God-given mandate to bring Christ to the world.

Over the past several years, our Grace Ministries International missionary family has been

graced with growth and has become even more international. Missionaries are serving with us from Aruba, Brazil, Cameroon, Curacao, Costa Rica, Tanzania, Bolivia, Zambia, Mexico, Uruguay, Congo, Ecuador, Zimbabwe, and the United States. Currently, that is more countries of origin than we have fields! Given that our mission is to share God's grace with the world, it helps to have such a worldwide representation with all of their backgrounds, experiences, and cultures working together towards this common purpose.

At times, our missionaries, already strangers in their host culture, are reaching distinct people groups within the country where they are serving. GMI missionaries Jack and Jane serving in

Consider some of the delineations we have made: poor and rich, those possessing resources and those without, the able and disabled, healthy and unhealthy, powerful and weak, born and unborn, young and old, convenient and inconvenient, wanted and unwanted.



Malawi are sharing the gospel among a relatively unreached people group. On an evangelistic trip to a remote village earlier this year, nearly a hundred people made a commitment to Christ! On another trip, while visiting an unreached people group on a lake, four fishermen accepted the gospel and began studying the Bible. These same missionaries attended the dedication of a bridge built (with financial gifts from GMI donors) over a river where many had been maimed or killed by crocodile attacks while trying to cross during the last several years. One local official from this nearly exclusive Muslim community shared, "If this is what Christianity is, I envy it," adding, "Please find me a Bible so I can start reading it, and I would want you to start a church here!"

Interestingly, God chooses to work through the Body of Christ comprised of very distinct groups: Jews and those from the rest of the nations, the Roman and the barbarian, the slave and free, male and female (1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11).

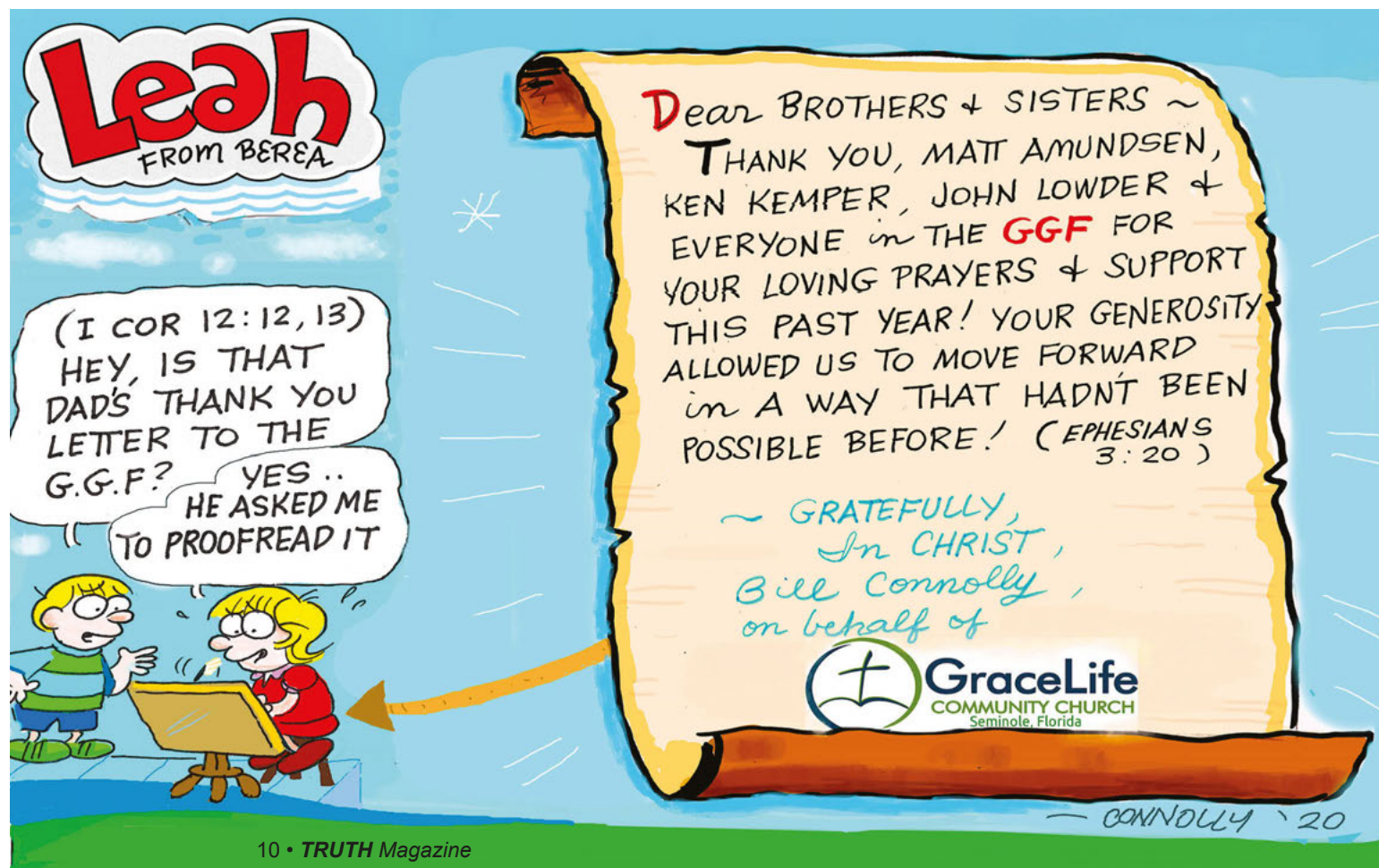
Racial distinctions are just one of the many non-moral differences humans draw between themselves and others to justify an ungodly disdain for their neighbor or those across the world. When we as Christians entertain these sinful desires, we hurt our relationship with God,

Even in Tanzania, where missionaries have been working for over a century, there are still 30 unreached people groups, many of which have their unique language reminding us of the lingering effects of the Tower of Babel. GMI missionary John Caprari has challenged Tanzanian believers to look beyond their immediate neighbors and consider those untouched with the message of the cross within their own country. Several have responded to this need as John works with them to facilitate an effort for those Tanzanians who know God to reach those who do not.

The Apostle Paul fought against disunity within the newly formed Body of Christ throughout his ministry. He reminded the Roman believers, "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith" (Romans 12:3). In fact, is this not how Satan erred thinking of himself as even greater than the Son? When we think of ourselves more highly than we should, we necessarily must think of others lower than we should. We create distinctions emanating from our pride, which will lead to sin no matter the scale.

Racial distinctions are just one of the many non-moral differences humans draw between themselves and others to justify an ungodly disdain for their neighbor or those across the world. When we as Christians, no matter our race, entertain these sinful desires, we hurt our relationship with God, and with others quenching whatever passion there might have been to reach people who are different than we with the gospel. We cannot expect the world to act morally. When they do, they necessarily borrow it from God, whether it originates from their conscience or the residual teachings of God-centered culture. In fact, this is why we need to continue to vocalize publicly and privately what it is that pleases God in every area of life. As Christians, we possess the mind of Christ, which, in part, is to recognize that all people are created in the image of God. When we remember this, we eliminate no one from the list of those to whom we are willing to share the gospel. Is there anyone with whom you will not share the gospel because of an ungodly distinction you have made between yourself and another?

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Politics and the Biblical Christian in America

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by Ken Bruce Kemper, PhD.
President
Grace Christian University

We are at the peak of the political season right now in America. The November 3 election gets closer every day, and therefore constant campaigning for votes and attacks against political opponents is present at every level from local to state to national. Debates take place where each candidate attempts to do their best to convince voters that they will be the best person to serve their constituents and make the world a better place if elected.

Views about Politics and Christians

Christians have some strong opinions about politics, and they are widely divergent. Jeff Myers and Dave Noble (*Understanding the Times*, 2016, Summit Ministries) list the following five perspectives:

- Christians Shouldn't Be Involved In Politics. This view began in response to the intellectual attacks on religion in the 1800s, and it greatly increased at the turn of the 20th Century here in America. Through the medium of the American "secular" public education, modern science has enforced this and sought to regulate church and

religion to the faith realm and leave the facts and politics to non-biased (meaning not religious) perspectives. This sacred-secular bifurcation is not biblical, even if it is popular today.

- Society isn't worth redeeming. As dispensationalists, we believe the present world and society will not save the world or inaugurate the return of Christ. The Church of true believers will have been raptured out, prior to the Tribulation and Second Coming of Christ, which will bring judgment on this fallen world and it's man-made systems of government. After this takes place, Christ will ascend the throne in the 1000 year Millennial Kingdom. D.L Moody is quoted as saying, "I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel."
- Christianity is only about the institution of the church and isn't concerned with government affairs. Martin Luther is quoted in this view when in the Reformation, he made the distinction between the king-

...American "secular" public education, modern science ... sought to regulate church and religion to the faith realm and leave the facts and politics to non-biased (meaning not religious) perspectives. This sacred-secular bifurcation is not biblical, even if it is popular today.

Each government is responsible for leading in a peaceful and just manner as well as being accountable to those they oversee. We see it in God's instructions to Adam and Eve, to Noah and his family, to Abram and to Isaac, Jacob, and his sons, and then to all of the nation of Israel in the Mosaic Law.

dom of heaven and the kingdom of man. These well-meaning Christians believe the central message of Christianity is the Gospel and does not inform civil affairs. They do not see personal or community change as the realm of Christian aspirations.

- *Political structures can't change the human heart.* These folks believe that Christians are to form an alternative to the broken world, which is attractive and exclusively concentrate on winning others to faith in Christ. The Gospel and the church alone can accomplish authentic change, and the political and social change isn't worth the effort—if in the end, the heart is not changed to believe. These people have good points about the weakness of a "Social Gospel," and therefore abstain from involvement altogether.
- *Christian should be involved and seek to be influential in politics to revive America.* These folks believe that they can save the country by electing believers into every

The **United States** was founded as a **republic** comprised of **representative leaders** elected to serve the good of their constituents and society.

position, and the nation would again receive God's blessing and be a light to the nations. They have a strong sense of moral integrity, but not a realistic grasp of the human heart in general, or mankind

and his resistance to God's way, even if aligned with the Bible. This view sees the solutions to every evil as governmental and political.

Is there a Biblical Answer?

This will be the fourth article in a row in which I call upon the people of God to begin with the **Bible** and not the present opinions promoted by our world. To begin with, the issue (whether it is human sexuality, immigration, or racial tension) may appear to allow us to give a biblical response. However, it often begins with an established perspective on an issue than finding Scripture to justify the perspective. ***May I again call us to start with God and His Word.***

Early in Genesis, as Noah, his sons, and their wives exit the ark, we find God making a covenant with Noah, instructing him to establish human rule over other humans for the good and well-being of all mankind. (Genesis 9:5-6). We refer to this as the Dispensation of Human Gov-

ernment, which continues through the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 (*this equals a period of 100-200 years by best estimates*). But essentially, if we define government as the establishment of order and guidelines for human society to be safe and receive justice from tyranny, it began with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden more than 6,000 years ago. Each government is responsible for leading in a peaceful and just manner as well as being accountable to those they oversee. We see it in God's instructions to Adam and Eve, to Noah and his family, to Abram and to Isaac, Jacob, and his sons, and then to all of the nation of Israel in the Mosaic Law (Exodus 19-20).

It should be noted that God instructed His people in both personal and societal guidelines for living and designated just punishments for those who did not live accordingly. *This* is the essential duty of government: *to protect and enable mankind to live out their vocations and stewardship before God.* The government is supposed to protect the organizational structures (*marriage, the family, local leadership, and enforcement of divine and natural laws*) given to man and allow them to thrive.

Government rule must be based on moral standards and truth in order to be just. Justice is the practice of truth and the giving of value to all people, the way God does – without bias or human disregard or prejudice. Where will the government and its leaders get this standard of truth if not from God and His people? What is the basis of ethical understanding? A cry for "justice" of any kind without recognizing truth will not be equitable to all (whether it be racial, gender, age-related, or national).

America's Founding Constitution

The United States was founded as a republic comprised of representative leaders elected to serve the good of their constituents and society.

Early documents show that 52 of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were church-going orthodox Christians (Kennedy & Newcombe, *What if the Bible had never Been Written?* Nashville, 1998, p. 90). Although Jefferson authored the document, it has been pointed out that John Adams, a devout Christian, chaired the committee, which did extensive edits to bring about the final edition (Evans, *The Theme is Freedom*, Encyclopedia Britannica, Washington D.C., 1994, pp. 231-232).

Justice is the practice of truth and the giving of value to all people, the way God does – without bias or human disregard or prejudice.

The uniqueness of the Constitution is the formation of three distinct branches of the government to legislate, adjudicate, and execute. These three branches were to supply checks and balances toward each other, and equitably govern the population. *The Federalist No. 51*, authored by James Madison in 1788, explains this important ingredient of the government structure (Madison, *The Federalist No. 51*, (electronic retrieval from www.ourdocuments.gov <https://tinyurl.com/y63k67rb>). This all came out of the predominantly biblical worldview of the founding fathers. They believed that God had created all men in the image of God. Yet during this time they lived, women were not given voting rights, and slavery had long been present among some classes, and unfortunately, these people were not given equal protections of the law in most developed countries.

The founders of America believed – as the Bible teaches – that all mankind is fallen (Romans 3:11, 23), and would need accountability (checks and balances). Therefore, not anyone individual or group could be allowed to rule without a system of accountability. This is because no man can be counted on to be completely just as God is, and therefore must be accountable not only to God but to others.

They created the Constitution, which gave limited authority to national leaders. They left state authority intact so that a simple majority in Washington D.C. could not trample the local wishes of the states where they lived (Madison called this the “tyranny of the majority”) (Feulner, Edwin J. “*Preventing ‘The Tyranny of the Majority’*” Heritage Foundation, March 7, 2018).

They also believed in the character of God to be good and just. From this worldview, we can then conclude that the founding documents were written with the belief that man was made in God’s image; he was responsible and valuable, but he was fallen and must be held accountable, and that he ultimately desired and deserved justice. This justice is the application of truth to all relationships between individuals and within society in which everyone is treated fairly. The founding fathers created and stated in this document their belief that the government leaders were to serve the people, rather than the other way around. Government service was almost exclusively voluntary, with low stipends requiring men to return home and carry on their livelihoods as well as serve the young flourishing

nation. This would be similar to Christ’s words in Mark 10:45 of coming to serve rather than be served. Our first president, George Washington, stated in his farewell speech:

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports...Let it simply be asked: Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution, indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion (Barton, *Celebrate Liberty! Famous Speeches & Sermons*, Wallbuilder Press, 2013).

These leaders wrote in the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” From where did this language come? It obviously came from the pervasive biblical literacy of their time. They honestly believed that these rights were not granted by some benevolent government, but rather by a Creator God.

When Flawed Humanity Rules

This new nation, with a strong biblical founding, was full of sinful mankind who would multiply and prosper along with those God-fearing men who gave their lives to form the new society here in America. In the 1800s the “enlightened” ideology from Europe made its way to America and was propagated in literature and education by those calling themselves “progressives.” These individuals brought a new emphasis on science and reason. They elevated it beyond religion and biblical truth (Schambra, William A. and Thomas West, “*The Progressive Movement and the Transformation of American Politics*,” Heritage Foundation, July 18, 2007). The “progressives” led societal initiatives in America which **no longer focused on equal opportunity to succeed, but rather targeted equal outcomes.** In other words, the “socialist” perspective differs from the biblical perspective in that it defines fair and equal as a **result** of government and societal actions rather than as a platform to al-

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They also believed in the character of God to be good and just. From this worldview, we can then conclude that the founding documents were written with the belief that man was made in God’s image; he was responsible and valuable, but he was fallen and must be held accountable, and that he ultimately desired and deserved justice.

If mankind and his human reasoning is elevated along with science and its never-concluding, vacillating claims of empirical research, then we have moved from the solid grounding for the underlying truth of all things (the Bible and God Himself) to the ever-shifting sands of mankind's latest whims and findings.

...in the government which God has placed, let us participate and let our voice be heard as biblical followers of God's principles, speaking this truth as foundational for human and societal thriving.

low all men the equality to achieve their earned efforts. It is the difference between somehow guaranteeing "happiness" for all (as if that were even possible), versus giving a fair playing field for "the pursuit of happiness." This worldview continued to grow and dominate American culture and became popular beyond the foundational worldview, which guided the development of the American Republic (Merriam, C. Edward, *A History of American Political Theories*, 1903, pp. 307,311). No longer was there agreement to objective Truth as emanating from God, His character, and His Word. **This singular worldview shift was seismic and far reaching in impact on everything.**

If mankind and his human reasoning is elevated along with science and its never-concluding, vacillating claims of empirical research, then we have moved from the solid grounding for the underlying truth of all things (the Bible and God Himself) to the ever-shifting sands of mankind's latest whims and findings. This new path is an endless one of shifting cultural norms, personal biases (conscious and unconscious), popular opinion, latest technological discoveries (thinking AI), or post-modern popular pluralism (everyone is right, and each one is their own god). Our government and society cannot be equitable any longer absent the truth needed for justice and the path to predictable results for specific actions (good or bad). Many examples of changes we've observed are evidenced today in social issues such as gender confusion, treatment of immigrants, rights of citizenship, as well as racial discrimination and unrest. All of these are very difficult without the principles and guidance of godly direction for mankind – found in the Bible.

So What Should Genuine Christians Do Today?

There is no possible way a believer can find a truly "righteous" candidate to be elected for any office in the land! Nor could that elected official rule religiously and be followed today. All of them are flawed human beings, seeking to lead and represent the ideologies they believe or represent on behalf of others. But, as followers of Christ armed with God's Word, *we can know* the principles of truth, moral order, just punishment for crime, and human responsibility and dignity. We can recognize that Jesus engaged public of-

ficials in conversations and also mentioned them in illustrations while teaching. He healed a political leader's child (John 4:46-54) and did not run from them or condemn their existence. Instead, he did speak to their poor practices (abuses) and flawed character in carrying out their leadership (Matthew 20:25). He encouraged submission to those placed in governing positions, and the payment of taxes (Matthew 17:24-27).

The Apostle Paul lived in a heated political time as well. The Romans, as well as the Jewish leaders, were adversarial toward him, and the new believers faced persecution for their faith. Yet, he instructed the believers of his time to pray for and respect the government leaders (Romans

13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-2). His prayer should be ours, that government would give us the ability to "live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

As believers, we should "govern well," where God has placed us. The family is God's place where leadership must allow children and spouses to thrive and be given the opportunity to grow and blossom with encouragement and guidance (Colossians 3:19-21). In the church, we must serve well and respect the leadership that God has called to serve (Hebrews 13:17). And finally, in the government which God has placed, let us participate and let our voice be heard as biblical followers of God's principles, speaking this truth as foundational for human and societal thriving. Let us vote based on these principles, which value life, liberty, and equality for all mankind. The core values which come from God and our faith should be the guide for our political decisions and the candidates for whom we cast our vote. Let us engage others and our elected officials in these conversations, along with praying for them. All this for God's glory above any national interest.

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A photograph of a narrow wooden boardwalk winding through a dense, misty bog. Tall reeds and grasses line the path, with sunlight filtering through the trees in the background, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere.

A Different Approach to a Fragile Ecosystem

by Pastor David Simmer
Grace Bible Church
Newago, MI

"It is a fragile ECOSYSTEM. Stay on boardwalk."

These words are an excerpt from the sign welcoming hikers to a trail near my home. The short, U-shaped footpath winds through a small, sphagnum bog filled with evergreens, cinnamon ferns, ponds, wildlife, and, of course, moss. The path is one of my family's favorite jaunts, not only because of its size but also because of the ever-changing nature of the bog. On any given week, portions of the boardwalk may be submerged under water, haphazardly angled, missing pieces, or enveloped in some wild growth that's fighting to regain its territory. Each journey begins with excitement as we anticipate the subtle changes that have happened from our last trek. Will we have to clear some brush? Will we stumble upon a barred owl again? Will we run and swat wildly as the mosquitos attempt to carry us away?

I recently grabbed a cup of coffee and walked the path by myself. It was a cool day and had been ages since I'd strolled in a solitary manner, intending to meander, listen, and pray. This trail consists of two entrances both leading to a central "reflection point" where the terrain changes and the ground returns to normal. There you are encouraged to sit, ponder, reflect, and enjoy (or, if you're a toddler run, climb, and jump). I almost always enter and exit the path in the same manner. But this time I chose to live on the wild side and walk the path from both directions and, to be honest, it felt weird. The turns were unfamiliar, the trees and plants looked different, the gaps in the path came at unexpected moments, and I had to really watch where I was walking. It wasn't until the midway point where things felt normal. There was stability and familiarity as I took a brief pause and regathered my thoughts before finishing my hike.

The past six months have brought to light the fragility of the ecosystem in which we live. Many

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of us had settled into a comfortable routine and were more than happy to maintain the trajectory and path we'd come to know. But the circumstances we find ourselves in today have brought disruptions that demand our attention. The entire world is experiencing just how delicate our environment truly is. It's not to say that catastrophe, racial and gender oppression, or economic downturns just sprang up overnight. Instead, it's just that many of us have been able to avoid dealing with those issues on a personal or local level. And if you're like me, you've undoubtedly found yourself questioning the roles of leadership you have been given in these circumstances, whether that's at home, at work, or in the church. Moments of great strife always reveal the weaknesses and insecurities that lie just beneath the surface. As

we gather at "reflection

points" attempting to find our places of community, oneness, and consistency, our insecurities have reared their ugly heads in egregious ways. Rather than moments of refreshing fueled by the wondrous experience of unity and peace in our worship, the tensions of our surroundings have disrupted our familiarity and stability, many of us in the church (specifically church leadership) are finding ourselves

humbly ill-prepared to navigate this incredibly volatile environment. Let's be honest; we're exhausted, we're ill-prepared, we're frustrated, we're confused, we're hurting for those suffering losses, and we really just need a nap.

Our ecosystem is responding to the hurt, loss, oppression, and destruction. Some critical questions are being asked, and dialogues are coming to light that have been silenced (often by the church) for far too long. And our churches are generally not set up to be places that navigate these circumstances well. This territory we find ourselves in requires more listening than we've ever done. Voices are crying out with anguish, and we must consider the method and message of our responses. Of course, the gospel is the answer and it must always be made known to be so. But the power of the gospel is not solely limited to words nor is it limited to

those who generally or historically have had the podium. The good news of Jesus Christ is limitless in scope and grabs hold of hearts in ways not manufactured by man. It's precisely what our hurting world has and will always need. We need a vision for the present and a vision for the future.

The good news is, the church is precisely the place where these kinds of burdens should be given a voice. Romans 12:15-18 addresses this specifically when Paul says, "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of

low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with every-

one." The Body of Christ, at its best, is a place of reflection. It's a group of people all sharing oneness with Christ, extending an invitation to travelers from every path to come and taste the living water. It's a place where unity and peace in Christ join in our worship to form a vision for both the present and the future. It's where we join with the sentiment of early Jewish believers on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Psalm 122 voices an eager desire to gather where "all the tribes go up" to share in worship. It describes Jerusalem as a place of unity (vs. 2), a place where God's structure and justice reign supreme (vs. 4-5), and a place where peace is known to all who enter its walls (vs. 6-8). It speaks to what the pilgrims knew Jerusalem to be and what they desired her to become (including David when he wrote the psalm). While our setting has been transformed into something much better, we too, have this same perspective in our corporate worship. We know our places of worship to be settings where beautiful manifestations of the Holy Spirit take place. We've seen moments of repentance and salvation, gospel and grace, mercy and generosity, and unity and peace. We've known powerful examples of forgiveness as members of the body have lived out Ephesians 4:3-6. But there are days where that seems more like a distant memory than a present or future reality.

So, what do we do? In order to re-establish our vision for the present, we must become board-

In order to re-establish our vision for the present, we must become boardwalks to the gospel.



We've known powerful examples of forgiveness as members of the body have lived out Ephesians 4:3-6. But there are days where that seems more like a distant memory than a present or future reality.

walks to the gospel. A boardwalk is constructed with flexibility. It is made of materials that enhance the environment and allows travelers a safe path to navigate and experience the wild beauty. It's exposed to the elements while protecting both those who travel and the space in which it exists. It acknowledges the validity of the journey each individual has taken and gently guides them to a central place of reflection. There, insights from their journey are shared, rest is enjoyed, the gospel is lived, and unity and peace are shared with other travelers. This is the model set forth for us by Christ as He took on the form of a servant (Philippians 2:5-8). In the prayer "For those Whom are Employed" from the book "Every Moment Holy" by Douglas MacKelvey it says,

"Grant me, therefore, the patience to listen to others, the humility to learn from them, the compassion to consider their needs as my own, and the grace to wear well in this place the name of my Lord, remembering that I arrive here each day as an emissary of your kingdom."

Our congregations will not have a gospel vision for the present if they are not lead there by the actions and attitudes of leadership.

So, how does that look? In order to cast a gospel vision for the future, we must allow other voices the opportunity to speak. It begins with acknowledging that our path, experiences, and

perspectives are limited and singular and that oftentimes a different perspective is needed.

We know that the body of Christ is made up of individuals from every tribe, tongue, age range, political party, color of skin, and gender (Galatians 3:28), but do our gatherings reflect that truth within the context of our communities? Are the testimonies of each person heard and valued?

Are the insights of each age demographic considered as of equal importance? Does the artist have room to create? Do young leaders have the green light to guide into the future? Do hurts and concerns of individuals bring us to action? Do we acknowledge our own limitations and seek understanding from each other? Do we listen and support when God is leading another to speak? Often a different voice will bring to light a significant issue in the present that is stifling the opportunity for action. And when a voice is heard, and appropriate action is taken, the church can move forward in healing and unity.

The ecosystem is fragile. It requires diligent, prayerful action to cast a gospel vision for the present and the future. May we engage with endurance the responsibilities and communities God has given us. And may we diligently commit ourselves to becoming boardwalks of the gospel.

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"Grant me, therefore, the patience to listen to others, the humility to learn from them, the compassion to consider their needs as my own, and the grace to wear well in this place the name of my Lord, remembering that I arrive here each day as an emissary of your kingdom."

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:5-8

Troy Sergey,

GGF Pastoral Residency Program

by Troy Sergey

Last year, Matt Amundsen, Executive Director of the Grace Gospel Fellowship, approached me in the student commons at Grace Christian University with an idea. He knew that I would be graduating in the spring with my Bachelor's Degree in Pastoral Ministry and wanted to provide a ministry opportunity right out of college to immerse myself in and establish a stronger foundation for vocational ministry. I had learned, accepted, and embraced the Grace message during my time in college and wanted to be mentored in a GGF church post graduation. Matt's idea was a pastoral residency program. It would be half internship and half job where I would further develop what had been instilled in me during my time at GCU, and through the internship where I served at Parkside Bible Church with Pastors Gary Spykerman and Joe Johnson. I was "all in" with this idea as I have a great passion and desire to serve others and preach the truth of God's grace through Christ's death and resurrection. After I expressed my interest, Matt began contacting GGF pastors around the midwest and throughout the country he thought would be a great mentor under which I could serve. Pastor Trent Boedicker of Grace Gospel Church in Ada, Ohio, expressed interest in working with me and being a key leader in my development for future ministry.

After meeting Pastor Trent on multiple occasions, including at the GGF Leadership Conference and Theology Summit, I felt confident we would be a great fit, so I agreed to join him for my pastoral residency. I started at Grace Gospel Church the first week of July, and I have very much enjoyed my experience. There have been plenty of ministry opportunities that have

stretched me. One of the goals for the residency is to better prepare me for my oral exam in the spring of 2021. If successful, I will be licensed as a GGF pastor, which is exciting to me. Pastor Trent and I have read and studied Charles Baker's book *Bible Truth* together. Additionally, we have looked at many journal articles that pertain to Dispensational and Systematic Theology. This study opportunity has been beneficial for me in helping me grasp and talk through scripture and important theological issues.

With the COVID-19 virus still alive and active, we have not been able to do Sunday School or any Youth Ministry activities. Once things get rolling again, I will assist in leading a few of those ministries at the church. One aspect of ministry that is exciting to me is having been able to be involved with the "Fellowship of Christian Athletes" at the local high school. We've also been fortunate to use our church building for a Christian group from a public high school. I've enjoyed leading devotionals, sharing my experience as a Christian athlete in high school, and impacting people in this community who don't attend the church. Lastly, I have had the opportunity to experience nursing home visitations, preaching monthly, and attending monthly board meetings. I am grateful for the Grace Gospel Fellowship giving me this on-the-job ministry opportunity where I have been able to learn practical ministry and be mentored and trained under an ordained GGF Pastor. I hope future graduates of the Pastoral Ministry program at Grace Christian University have the opportunity to partner with the Grace Gospel Fellowship and get immersed in a Grace Church under the newly-established Pastoral Residency Program.

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Troy Sergey is a graduate of Grace Christian University in the Pastoral Ministry track. He is the first participant of the GGF Residency Program. One aspect of the program is to assist the participant in paying down his school debt, so as to set him up for a better future by reducing his debt load (\$50/week for as long as 1-year).

WHY AREN'T WE ALL PLAYING THE SAME GAME?

by Pastor Timothy McGarvey

Executive Director
Grace Publications, Inc.

Someone I once knew would eventually invoke a particular response if we were engaged in a discussion in which we had opposing views. He would inevitably say, "Don't confuse me with the facts. My mind is made up already." As we look out across the current landscape of public opinion, we can see how this same mindset is at work. It's in response to the government's seemingly heavy-handed approach to the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in closing down the economy which drove the unemployment figures to numbers that hadn't been seen since the Great Depression. Racial tensions rage through communities across the country. What began as peaceful demonstrations have evolved into violent riots. Lives have been lost or destroyed in the wake as leaders seek answers to the issues.

The rise in social media has helped to fan the flames of disparity. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and more are burgeoning with what some regard as venomous rhetoric. Regardless of the subject at hand, it must always be kept in mind that good people do and will disagree. A wise person once said, "No matter how thin you may

make the pancake, it will always have at least two sides."

I fully understand that there are subjects upon which there can be no compromise. While they are primarily dealt with through political institutions, the reality is that they are biblical issues. Hot buttons such as abortion, gay lifestyle/marriage, race, and gender are but a few examples. With these, there seems to be no area of possible compromise. A friend of mine would sarcastically say, "You can't be somewhat pregnant!" Ecclesiastes 7:13 states, "Consider the work of God; For who can make straight what He has made crooked?"

In his letter to the Colossians, the Apostle Paul lays down a great foundation upon which we are to conduct our lives. He writes, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (3:17). This admonishment would completely encompass our lives since he says, "...in WORD (all that is spoken) or DEED (that which is done)...." When conquering armies would overtake an enemy, they would proclaim that their actions were "In the name of the King." Paul tells us that our words and deeds are

to be “...in the name of the Lord Jesus...”

In Ephesians 6:6-7, Paul writes, “Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.” Here again, the Apostle speaks to our conduct. His use of the phrase “men-pleasers” addresses a common source of compromise. Our natural desire is to get along with people. To accomplish that goal, we tend to become “men-pleasers.” In the end, this may also place our testimony for the Lord in jeopardy.

Bible-believing Christians often are accused of being intolerant and even hateful. This view comes from not understanding the desire to be obedient to God and not merely be “men-pleasers.” Many politicians will make claims of strong religious faith but will promote anti-biblical positions. To justify such actions, they will hide behind the claim that they cannot impose their religious beliefs on others. It is interesting that the word intolerant only applies to one side of the argument. It’s a lot like the word “fair.” People will say that something isn’t fair. To illustrate that, I use an example of two children who each have been given a piece of cake, one slightly larger than the other. Immediately, the child receiving the smaller slice cries in dismay, “That’s not fair! Their piece is bigger than mine!” Would they have voiced the same kind of dissatisfaction if they had gotten the larger piece? So, what fair typically means is what benefits me the most. Like the word “fair,” toleration is only expected from the opposing view. I have no need to be tolerant of you, but you must bend and tolerate me.

This constant friction of two opposing views is the logical byproduct of a realism that is long-entrenched in our national thinking and politics. The late apologist Ravi Zacharias explains this division as being more of a sociological problem than theological. One would desire that when it came to theology there would be more unity. However, that is not the case. There are many views concerning the Bible, its authority, and its interpretation. To a Bible-believer, the Word is verbally inspired and to be understood literally. It is the final authority in all matters. To the more moderate or liberal groups, the Bible is flexible and bends with current thought and culture. The Roman Catholic would never use the term “final authority” when speaking of the Bible. That is reserved for church counsels, traditions, church

fathers, and the Pope. Because of this variation among those who call themselves “Christian,” theology becomes a moot point. That brings us to the sociological aspect. In what kind of society do we live?

During a Q&A session at a prestigious university, Zackarias was asked a question regarding homosexuality (If you search YouTube under Zackarias and any or all of the three words listed below, you will find this encounter.). His response to that question sparked a much larger debate as it relates to society. He contended that the basics of culture derive from one of three possibilities. Those three cultures are Theonomous, heteronomous, and autonomous. He defined them in this way.

1. Theonomous: (Theo (God) and nomous (Law)) This is ‘God’s law.’ Our founding fathers embedded this thought in the Declaration of Independence when they penned, “These truths are self-evident....” It is a kind of natural law.
2. Heteronomous: (Hetero (Another) and nomous (Law)) In this form of culture, leadership dictates the law to the masses. Islam and Communism are examples of a heteronomous society.
3. Autonomous: (Auto (Self) and nomous (Law)) Here, each individual sets their own law.

Determining what kind of culture we live in is the sociological dilemma. If we are an autonomous society, then everyone can express their own unchallenged opinions freely. But, as Ravi points out, when a person disagrees and demands that their ideas be adopted, we immediately switch to a heteronomous society where the individual making the demands dictates the terms. It would seem obvious then that every autonomous culture will have this conflict because everyone has their own autonomy. Now to the relational aspect of society.

Several years ago, in California, a group of police officers was acquitted after being video-recorded violently beating a man they were attempting to arrest. Riots erupted in which homes and businesses were looted and burned. That man was Rodney King. Later, during riots after the O.J. Simpson verdict, he stood before the cameras and media and asked this simple question. “Can’t we all just get along?” A great question but not one that has an easy answer. How do we

settle our disputes, and upon what basis is that determination made?

As believers, we live in an autonomous society, but we are to endeavor to lead a heteronomous (God-directed) life. In Paul's letter to the Romans, we read a passage that speaks directly to our point. There we read, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (12:1-2).

Here Paul uses the word "sacrifice." Chuck Swindol once said that the problem with living sacrifices is that they tend to crawl off the altar. The animal that had been slain and placed on the altar was no longer able to escape the flame. The same is seen in Paul's words for the church today. In my Bible I wrote these words in the margin above the Romans 12 chapter. "Living sacrifice means "Totally consumed for the purpose of God." It means to be emptied of self and filled with God. That means to sacrifice your "autonomous" to live under the "Theonomous." If we are living by God's law (Gal. 6:2; 5:14) then our words and deeds will be reflected.

Social media has taken over our society and is a place where everyone is allowed to voice their opinion on any and all subjects. Sometimes the posts are very humorous, others are family oriented, and some relate to current events. It's this last group with which we want to deal. As we have already said, not all of us agree on every subject. God has given each of us a mind that is free. As believers, we must be involved in the "politics" of the day. Imagine a society completely devoid of Christian influence. But we must speak the truth, and we must say it in love (Eph. 4:15). Truth divides. Truth is offensive. More often than not, it is not the truth that offends; it is the attitude of the truth-teller.

Keep in mind that there is no such thing as "your truth" or "my truth." There is only one truth. Everything else is merely individual opinion. Truth is found in Jesus Christ (John 14:6) and His Word.

James never envisioned the phenomena called social media when he penned his letter, but these words are very fitting. In chapter 3:5-13, we read these words, "Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of [iniquity]. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both saltwater and fresh. Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom."

As we struggle with our culture and place in society, we are reminded of Jesus' words in John 15:18-19, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, ...the world hates you." We can have and stand for differences, but let our words be spoken in love and seasoned with salt. Our testimony in the world should reflect the love and light of Jesus Christ.

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TRUTH for kids

This page is for all of the younger ones in our lives. We hope to be able to convey sound biblical TRUTH that can strengthen and encourage. We will try to have something for all ages, We believe that even young lives should be grounded in the TRUTH of Paul's message of GRACE in the dispensation of the GRACE of God. Enjoy!



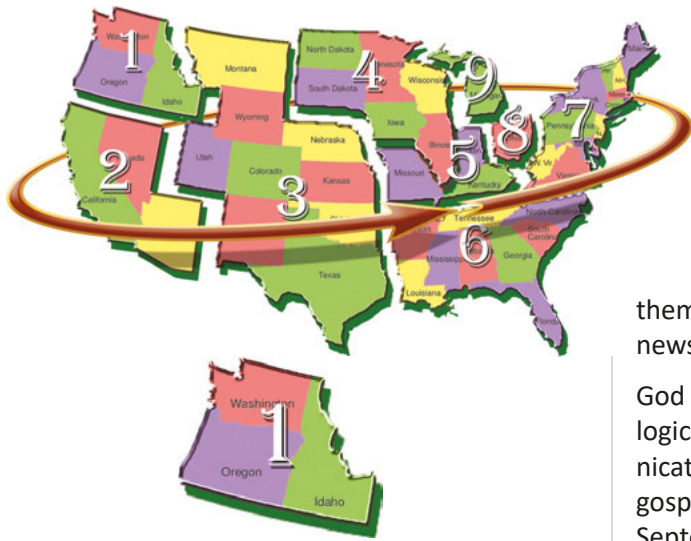
The Apostle Paul

The Apostle Paul is a very important man in the New Testament. He had been an enemy of Jesus but would become His greatest preacher. Paul wrote more books in the New Testament than anyone else--13 of the 27. It is in his books that we find the gospel of GRACE, the good news that tells us how to be saved and live for Jesus. In Galatians 5, Paul tells us about the "Fruit of the Spirit," and in Ephesians 6, he shows us the "whole armor of God." One of his most loved verses is Ephesians 2:8-9, *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not of works, so that no one can boast."*

Find the words from the list on the right in the puzzle below and circle them. Words can go in any direction.

Z I G
U G Z L P G L Q H
Z L O L W I R M T S U O B
R K W Y W T O C O D C U O E Q J S
R H S D J B V L J M S L O V E I R C U
O Z E S G H Z V J A A H W B R J J M K L X
M Y C B T M P L C Z N T C R O I E X P Z D
E Y V A H U U H U A Y S I C D W U N E J K R V
P H W M T H E S S A L O N I A N S A T J Q Q D
W H U J C P I O G A L A T I A N S C F J H T S M U
Y E F P Y A H T M I S D O G F H E K R L N I A K Q
S S E N D N I K U S S E N L U F H T I A F D A M S
F E I S Y Q U L P E S E T S L T I M O T H Y F D N G L
L W A S P H I L E M O N P I U G Q Z B S X M J C T S K
D F N E A W C A R Q A E A L A N D E D L M M L R W U B
P S N P P O G Y Y F V E A P M M I S S I O N A R Y
R F E O K L W E M P I Y S L D G Q C I M R X D D M
G Y L S G O J J L R G P H I L I P P I A N S D F L
R T T O S Q Z P I R V O P Z S D Z K F Z T J U
T N L T S P R Y S O G O O D N E S S D M O J V
E E G I S O Z O F V M E U R P V U R U N A
G O O A Z G D N J T B D E D N I L B X E T
W Q N X F Y X A I U F K N N C M U Y D
A S Y D S P S H I P W R E C K Q K
E Q J O U R N E Y U H E T
U B G B C D T C L
V B O

APOSTLE
PAUL
SHIPWRECK
SILAS
EPHESIANS
GALATIANS
PHILIPPIANS
ROMANS
CORINTHIANS
TITUS
~~TIMOTHY~~
PHILEMON
THESSALONIANS
COLOSSIANS
JOURNEY
PRISON
STONED
BLINDED
MISSIONARY
LOVE
JOY
PEACE
GENTLENESS
KINDNESS
GOODNESS
FORGIVENESS
FAITHFULNESS



REGIONAL NEWS FROM AROUND THE GRACE GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP

them for Jesus Christ. That is exciting and good news!

God has blessed us with people with the technological ability to use electronic ways of communicating with those in our communities with the gospel and solid Bible teaching. Lord willing, on September 28, it will be possible to come and worship with or without a mask. This also opens up the ability to resume our other ministries, but all in God's timing. There needs to be a "reacquainting" of the church family with one another. We need to refocus on the goal of evangelism of the lost and edification of the local body of believers. Pray for us as we pray for you in the proclamation and expounding of God's Word. Thanks so much!!!

Grace Bible Church in Grants Pass, OR, is praising God they started an eldership class. Pastor Todd James of Cascade Mountain Bible Church in Leavenworth, WA, reports that God has amazingly sustained their church during this time!

Grace Bible Church in Port Orchard, WA, reports that they are starting to return to in-person services, they have seen new people attend who were watching online. God is good!



Fall seems to be arriving early in Grace Bible Church of West Allis this year, and so has a change in our ministry for 2020. By this time, the fall programs are revving up, but not this year. We are in a state of flux, and the requirement of masks in Wisconsin has limited our congregation from coming to worship services, and most of our ministries are on hold until "further notice." That is the sad and bad news!

However, God is at work in other ways in our communities and our world. He is working through live streaming and YouTube to our people and far beyond the walls of the church. God has given us an excellent presentation during our worship services, and we have plans to put some short blogs on our new website, which is now online and in transition to becoming even better. Yes, our world is changing, and so is our penetration into the unsaved world to reach



Grace Bible Church Anaheim has been closed down since the middle of June. But we finally got the word from Sacramento that we could open in September. So our first speaker on September 20, was a member of our Southgate Church, Javier Hernandez. Then Alex Gulart and his family came to California to fill the pulpit until they head back to Paraguay.

We missed hearing from you all.
Let us hear from you for the next issue.

GGFRN

GRACE GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP
REGIONAL NEWS

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM ALL
REGIONS AND ALL CHURCHES

Share how your church is dealing
with the national pandemic. Tell us
how you have continued to reach
your communities and what have
been the positive results.

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And we *know*
that in *all things*
God works for the *good*
of those who *love him,*
who have been *called*
according to his *purpose.*

Romans 8:28

