

INTERNATIONAL

THINGS
TO COME
MISSION

Harvest

SPRING 2022

THE MESSAGE



OF APOSTLE PAUL

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MY GENERATION

Ben Anderson, International Director



On Sunday, February 26, I spoke at the 44th Anniversary of the Central Luzon Association of Grace Churches in Manila, Philippines. The celebration was held at a university auditorium with 23 Grace churches participating and over 700 members in attendance. The theme was ***United Towards 2023 Vision***. The event was a victory celebration originally planned for 2020, but postponed to 2023 because of the pandemic.

While preparing my message I thought back to my boarding school days at Faith Academy in 1976-78 when there were no Grace churches in Manila. During the intervening 44 years, so many faithful men and women have invested their lives in preaching, teaching, evangelizing and planting the growing group of Grace churches. Some were present in the meeting while others have moved on.

We all have our generation to serve the Lord. In Apostle Paul's longest recorded message he states, "Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed" (Acts 13:36). In the Bible, a generation is 40 years, which is how long Saul and David served as kings, and also the length of time God punished a generation of Israelites who refused to trust and obey. If we think of completing college and getting started on our career by the age of 25-30, our generation would run through the age of 65-70. Those are our strongest and most productive years.

What mark will we make in our generation? And on the next generation? When I was a kid a popular song was *My Generation* by The Who which expressed the difficulty of the older generation understanding the younger generation. One line states, "I hope I die before I get old (talkin' 'bout my generation)." The reality is that the younger generation will naturally become the older generation, as it has for Pete Townshend who wrote those words.

Truth does not change between generations. The Jesus who is "the way, the truth and the life" is the same Jesus who is "the same yesterday and today and forever." Our gospel is Christocentric and must be proclaimed to every generation of every society. The reason Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world was to give hope to every person of every generation.

What is needed for the generational propagation of the gospel is what Eugene Peterson described as "a long obedience in the same direction." The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche stated from a humanistic perspective, "The essential thing 'in heaven and earth' is that there should be long obedience in the same direction; there thereby results, and has always resulted in the long run, something which has made life worth living." Faithfulness to God and his call is not a sprint, but a marathon. When a united group of people commit themselves to a task for an entire generation, the results will transcend their lifetime.

At the 44th Anniversary in Manila, I was overjoyed to see so many young people running the program and leading the service. The success of missionary work is in transferring the truth of Jesus Christ to the next generation. Praise the Lord that the investment of so many missionary lives in the Philippines has now resulted in the young people taking the responsibility of proclaiming the grace of God to their own generation. ❖

PAUL'S GOSPEL IS JESUS CHRIST

Timothy Board, Development Director

To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:27-28 NKJV

Back in the early 1990s, Ed & Linda Bedore ministered TCM at a TCM Bible and Ministry Training School in Embu, Kenya. This experience prepared them to spearhead the launching of a similar school in Wisconsin, Berean Bible Institute, where I completed the bulk of my undergraduate training for ministry.

As a newly married man, I was full of youthful vigor and ministry ambition. I was very familiar with God's Word, rightly divided, and this dispensational understanding of Scripture compelled me to embark upon the endeavor of "making all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery" (Eph.3:9). Dr. Bedore was a very wise man having a breadth of experience before and after he and his wife were saved later in life. He knew how to come alongside and redirect the passion of this young buck—along with many others—from being preoccupied with mere Bible knowledge to a Pauline balance between the doctrinal and practical truths of Scripture.

I often left Dr. Bedore's *Practical Dispensational Theology* classes feeling humbled by how little I really knew God's Word, but one time he arrested my attention with a statement that jarred me like never before. During a break between classes, we were discussing the distinctive nature of Pauline doctrine when he deliberately distilled the conversation into the heart of the matter by declaring with resolute biblical conviction: **"The Grace Message is Jesus Christ."** In so doing, he reminded me that Paul's gospel is preeminently "the preaching of Jesus Christ" and that he did it "according to the revelation of the mystery" (Rom.16:25). The focus of my heart and ministry were therefore encouraged to be upon Jesus Christ and living in total dependency upon Him alone as the Word of God to the praise of His glory. (continued next page)



L to R: Kenny Board, Andy Kern, Paul Craesmeyer, Georges Craesmeyer, Dean Reinheimer, Dr. W. Edward Bedore, Tim & Lori Board, Paul Turner, David VanWyck, Pastor Mike Keshan

After two decades of serving in churches, camps, and conferences across America and visiting foreign mission fields, I wholeheartedly affirm Dr. Bedore's distilled wisdom, because the heart of Paul's gospel is indeed Jesus Christ Himself according to at least three preeminent truths.

1. Preaching Jesus Christ as Almighty Creator is Foundational to Paul's Gospel – Col.1:16 cf. Acts 17:22-31 From everlasting to everlasting, there is one true and living God who reigns in majesty supreme. God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the Holy One of Heaven who has revealed the glorious triune nature of the Godhead through the handiwork of His exquisitely designed creation (Ps.19:1-4; Rom.1:20).

2. Preaching Jesus Christ as Merciful Savior is Central to Paul's Gospel – Col.1:13-14, 20 cf. Acts 13:38-39; 26:18. The blazing center of God's glory vested in the Person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the heart of the gospel of grace. At Calvary Christ bore the undiluted wrath of the Father on behalf of rebel sinners, and His royal blood provided redemption for all mankind. Salvation today is received as a free gift of grace through faith alone in Christ to the praise of His glory (Rom.3:21-26; 4:5; 2 Cor.4:3-4; Eph.1:13-14; 2:8-9).

3. Preaching Jesus Christ as Exalted Head is Functional to Paul's Gospel – Col.1:18 cf. Acts 20:28-32. The practical reality of "the Grace Message" is that Jesus Christ is Lord and therefore in charge of the Church, which is His Body. Christ loved the Church and gave Himself *for* it so that He could give Himself *to* it in order to magnify His glory in and through His people (Gal.2:20). This is experienced as they live in surrender to Christ by presenting their bodies unto Him as a living sacrifice day by day (Rom.12:1). As Christ's preeminence is experienced in the heart, His majesty is demonstrated in the context of a biblical personal and family life. Subsequently, local churches among all nations worldwide are built up and the light of the gospel is advanced to the ends of the earth. The mighty hand and outstretched arm of our exalted Savior goes before His people to lead, guide, and direct the pathway of their lives especially as they live in total dependency upon Him and His Word (Pr.3:5-6; 2 Cor.2:14-16; Phil.1:20-21). ❖

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

TCM missionaries continue to carry Apostle Paul's message to the world. How many countries can you count in this issue?



OUR GRACE COMMISSION

Ben Anderson

All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.

And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us.

We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

(2 Corinthians 5:18–20)

Apostle Paul's ministry and letters are uniquely oriented toward sending the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. He constantly emphasizes reaching the *Gentiles*—people who are not of Israel's bloodline. In Romans, for example, Paul mentions Gentiles 31 times. The four gospels reference Gentiles just 12 times and the Hebrew-Christian epistles (Hebrews–Jude) just 3 times, where it carries the negative meaning of *pagan*. Although the Gentiles were certainly ungodly, Paul recognized them as humans who needed a relationship with the living God. This Gentile outreach is in Paul's commission, "Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles' " (Acts 22:21).



In reaching the Gentiles, Paul uses the concept of 'reconcile' or 'reconciliation' 12 times to describe the desired relationship between God and man, including five in the passage quoted above. Other writers of Scripture use this word only to describe human relationships.

Paul's emphasis on reconciliation recalls the beginning. When God created humans in His image to share in ruling over His creation, God and man lived in perfect unity (Gen. 1:26–28). God walked, talked, worked and fellowshiped with His people in the Garden. Sadly, that beautiful relationship came to a shameful end.

So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After He drove the man out, He placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. (Gen. 3:23–24)

The banishing of Adam and Eve caused man to become separated from God and from the eternal life that is in Him. This remained the human condition awaiting God to provide a “way back” into a relationship with Him. After nearly 2000 years of human history, during which people were to choose to do what was “right,” God called Abraham and his descendants, promising him that “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen. 12:1–3). For the succeeding 2000 years God did indeed work with and through the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. In fact, we can call this the **Dispensation of Israel**, since the Old Testament and Gospels focus almost exclusively on this nation and their relationship to the world.

Since Israel had freedom to obey or reject God, they often chose to go their own way, culminating in the Jewish martyr Stephen’s condemnation and Israel’s blinding (Acts 13:10-11).

“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered Him—you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.” (Acts 7:51–53)

Although Israel as the nation of priests for the world had been judged, the Gentiles were not left by God without hope. God raised up Saul as a special apostle to proclaim salvation by grace through faith to the Gentiles. In fact, the Jewish Saul was renamed as the Gentile Paul when he began his first missionary journey in Acts 13:9. Paul himself referred to his calling as a **Dispensation of Grace** for the Gentiles.

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. (Eph. 3:1–3)

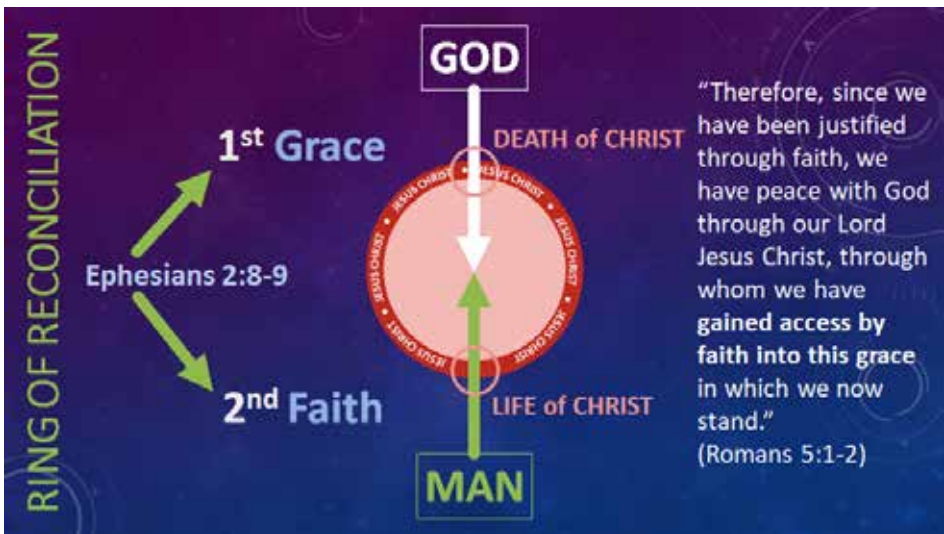
The word “administration” in this passage can be translated dispensation, stewardship or economy. The temporary hardening of Israel continues even today as God uses His workers to bring in the Gentiles (Rom. 11:25).

In 2 Corinthians 5:18–20 Paul emphasizes the *message* and *ministry* of reconciliation. In the oldest Bible book, Job asked how a sinful man could be righteous before God. The clear answer is 2 Cor. 5:21: “God made Him who



had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” God’s amazing grace at Calvary gives power to our profession of faith in the living Savior Jesus Christ. In Things to Come Mission we call this passage **The Grace Commission**.

Forgiveness can be accomplished by a single person, regardless of the response of the other party. Some years ago near a Grace Church in Indonesia, three teenage girls were killed by terrorists on their way to a Christian school. I was in Indonesia when the three mothers went to the prison and publicly forgave those terrorists. They said that they knew their daughters were in heaven and they would meet again. Because God forgave their sins, the mothers could forgive the terrorists for murdering their daughters. Unlike forgiveness, reconciliation requires the cooperation of two parties.



The diagram explains the concept of reconciliation. The two parties to be reconciled are GOD and MAN. God’s work in reconciliation was accomplished at Calvary and is called **Grace**. When Jesus died he declared, “It is finished”, meaning He had paid the penalty for all people, all sins and all time. Paul explains, “The death He [Jesus] died He died once for all.” Apostle John further explains, “He [Jesus Christ] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). This amazing act of God through His Son Jesus is emphasized in 2 Cor. 5:19, “God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them.” Thus, God has lovingly and sacrificially fulfilled the Grace part of reconciliation.

Apostle Paul explains the two parts of salvation in 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 by works, so that no one can boast.” The two parts of salvation (reconciliation) are **Grace** (God’s act of love) and **Faith** (man’s response to God). Although God’s grace depends on the death of Christ, our faith depends on the life of Christ. “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith” (1 Cor. 15:14 cf 17).

The resurrected Jesus Christ is the object of saving faith, prompting Paul to emphasize our faith in Christ three times in one verse, “know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but **by faith in Jesus Christ**. So we, too,

have **put our faith in Christ Jesus** that we may be **justified by faith in Christ** and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified" (Gal. 2:16; emphasis mine). Our human part in reconciliation is faith in Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:12).

Apostle Paul explains the relationship between grace and faith in Romans 5:1–2, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God." When our faith accesses God's grace, reconciliation is complete. Instead of falling short of the glory of God, we now have sure hope in the glory of God.

Gentiles are 99.8% of the world's population. They represent nearly all of the unreached peoples who are yet to hear the gospel. God wants all people to be saved (1 Tim. 2:3–4) and He has always wanted the Gentiles to be His people (Titus 2:14). This is the message of hope we proclaim to our lost world, "Be reconciled to God!" ❖



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THE BODY OF CHRIST

Nathan Bullock, TCM board member

The Bible speaks of a mystery not made known until given by revelation to Apostle Paul. At the heart of this mystery God brought into existence an entity called the Body of Christ. One might ask, what is the Body of Christ? What brought about revealing this Body? What are the rules for the Body of Christ? What are the blessings of being in this Body?

WHAT IS THE BODY OF CHRIST?

When a person believes Christ died for their sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, that person belongs to Christ. This is the good news, or “gospel” that Apostle Paul preached. God saves by grace, because of His love to those who are yet sinners. The Body of Christ consists of everyone who believes this gospel and puts their trust in Jesus Christ.

The Body Christ is one body made up of many members (1 Cor. 12:12). Christ Jesus as the head instructs the members through His word (Eph.1:22-23). Each member is “baptized” or placed into the Body by the Holy Spirit, identifying them with Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Each member is a new creation and given a new nature at salvation, and the Spirit of Christ dwells in them (Rom. 8:9). Each member is also given spiritual gifts for the function of the Body. God has joined the parts of the Body together to work as one, and members are exhorted to care for one another. Christ operates in this present evil age by His Spirit in the Body.

WHAT BROUGHT ABOUT REVEALING THIS BODY?

Before it was revealed there would be a Body of Christ, God made the nation of Israel the vehicle through which He would make Himself known (Ex. 19:3). God raised up Moses as His spokesperson and committed to him the law that was to govern His people, Israel. The work of God was to be exhibited to the world through His chosen nation, Israel (Ex. 34:10).

Why is God not working through Israel today? Jesus was presented to Israel as the Christ (Messiah) as recorded in the four Gospels. After His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, the long-promised kingdom on earth, spoken of in prophecy, was offered to Israel by Peter, John, and the Apostles. They preached salvation in Christ, telling the Jewish leaders and people of Israel to repent because they were guilty of crucifying their Messiah. Stephen also preached this message and was stoned to death at the direction of the High Priest (Acts chapters 1-8).

Romans 11 explains that Israel’s heart was hardened because of unbelief, so now Israel has been set aside. Israel in this age is not the channel of blessing. It is actually



through their falling away from God, that salvation has come to the Gentiles.

Paul, formerly known as Saul, was a persecutor of believers in Christ before his salvation. God saved him by grace to be the apostle to the Gentiles. The gospel of grace Apostle Paul preached (Acts 20:24) was not given him by any man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal.1:12-13).

The mystery revealed to Paul was the Dispensation of the Grace of God. The English word *dispensation* comes from the compound Greek word *oikonomia*—from *oikos* meaning *house* and *nomos* meaning *law* or *rules*. Thus, a set of *House Rules* was given to Paul to *dispense* to the *House*. Just as Moses' *House* was the nation of Israel, Apostle Paul's *House* is the Body of Christ (Eph.3:1-9). According to the *Dispensation* or *House Rules* the Lord revealed to Apostle Paul, the Gentiles would be fellow heirs with Christ, along with Jews, in one Body through the gospel of grace.

Paul faithfully discharged the duties revealed to him by Christ (Rom. 11:13). While he did preach to Jews, his primary ministry was to preach among the Gentiles (Gal.1:16). Paul explains in Rom. 11:25 that part of the mystery revealed to him is that a temporary hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. This will continue until the age of grace is ended at the rapture, when the Body of Christ is caught up in the air to meet Christ (1 Thes. 4:14-17).

Sometime after the Body of Christ's removal, God will return to His prophetic program with the 70th week of Daniel, which is the 7-year tribulation. During this time Rom. 11:26 will be fulfilled as all the believing remnant of Israel are saved to enter the long-awaited Millennial Kingdom. Christ will be the prophesied King of this kingdom.

WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST?

As Moses was committed with administering the law for Israel, Apostle Paul was committed with administering the law or rules for the Body of Christ. Paul was given this by revelation—a mystery or secret not made known in other ages. In Ephesians 3, Paul says he was sent to the Gentiles and given, by revelation, the dispensation or *house rules* of the grace of God. This was a change in God's plan for the ages from the dispensation of law given to Moses.

This new plan of God is characterized by grace, God's love and forgiveness to the undeserving. This plan was a secret never before revealed until Paul received it by revelation from the glorified Christ in heaven. Contained in this revelation was an entity known as the Body of Christ in which Gentiles would be equal to Jews, having no distinction of race.



Israel is set aside until the age of grace has run its course. Today God is using the Body of Christ as His channel of blessing to share the message of salvation to unbelievers and His message of how believers are to live for Christ. While all Scripture is profitable, Paul's epistles give specific instructions for

East Timor



the Body of Christ to operate. Perhaps the main *house rule* is we are no longer under law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14-15).

Apostle Paul is the only one who writes about the Body of Christ. The creation of this one “new man” is the supreme triumph of grace. Both Gentile and Jew were alienated from God, but now can be reconciled equally through the blood of Christ. The Body of Christ operates under the law of the Spirit, which replaces the law of Moses (Rom. 8:2).

WHAT ARE THE BLESSINGS OF BEING IN THIS BODY?

Being in the Body of Christ means the believer is placed into Christ and has great blessings. There is now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus because forgiveness is complete. Christians stand in Christ holy, righteous and redeemed before God. Our position in Christ is seated in the heavenlies.

Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians chapter 2:11-22 that Christ has abolished in His own crucified flesh the enmity caused by the law of Moses between Jew and Gentile. This Christ did that He might create in Himself one *new man*, thus making peace. Gentiles were alienated from Christ and from Israel’s God-given rights as a nation. Gentiles are now brought near to God by the blood of Christ. God has reconciled both Jew and Gentile in one Body by the cross, having put to death the hostility between them.

This *new man*, the Body of Christ, is a new order of humanity made up of both Jew and Gentile. This was made possible by Christ’s death on the cross, abolishing the law of Moses under which the nation of Israel operated (Eph. 2:15, Col. 2:14). Christ Jesus’ bodily sacrifice for sin makes possible the Spiritual Body of Christ. The Spirit of Christ operated in His earthly ministry in a human body; now, the Spirit of Christ operates in the Body of Christ, a spiritual body made up of His members.

Colossians 3:10 says believers have put on a new nature, which is Christ in the believer, renewed in knowledge after God who created this new nature. Because believers are a new creation there is no distinction between Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all. A believer’s identity is in Christ, not in nationality, race or gender (Gal. 3:28). All are one in Christ Jesus and are part of His Body. ❖

A PERSONAL JOURNEY OF GLORYING IN THE ONE BAPTISM

Pastor Jeff Seekins, Community Bible Church, Tipp City, Ohio

Not long ago, the Kansas City Chiefs and fans were exuberant as they celebrated their Super Bowl win. A few months earlier, the Astros and fans were hugging and screaming as they celebrated their World Series win. Those who played in those championships will never forget the thrill of victory they experienced.

Have you had spiritual victories? Were you excited when you were saved? Did you cry, laugh, have a sense of indescribable peace? When you learned you were secure in Christ because of the indwelling Holy Spirit did it thrill your heart? When you submitted to the Lord in general or in a certain area was your heart lightened? Have you ever been stirred in spirit as you meditated on what we have in Christ from Ephesians 1? Did it build confidence with thanksgiving and praise to God? Have you ever read a Psalm of praise and been moved to worship? When you learned the grace of God was for us and distinct from the law of God for Israel, were you joyful and relieved?

For me, understanding the glory of the one baptism was spiritual growth and victory. But as we look at this grand truth with glory, let me leave a word of caution that this isn't about the arrogance and loveless attitude that can come from knowledge as our apostle warned in 1Cor. 8:1.

When I first came face to face with the "one baptism" in Eph. 4:5, I was confident, after study, that it had to be the Spirit's baptism that placed us into the body, 1Cor. 12:13. But, I left it there because I wasn't able to connect it with other Scripture, and to be frank, I didn't know what to do with water baptism at the time.

But soon, I was exposed to the significance of "one" in Eph. 4 and began to glory in the glory of the one baptism and how it fit in the eternal plan of God. I began to see that the Spirit's baptism that put us into the body was a new revelation from God.

Oh, I had been taught that the Body of Christ was a mystery and revealed to the apostle Paul; but, I had been taught, inconsistently, that this Body began at Pentecost when Paul, then Saul, wasn't yet on God's team and hadn't received any revelation from God. When I discovered that inconsistency my eyes were opened to other inconsistencies in my understanding of Scripture which I soon connected with the glory of the one baptism.

My inconsistency was in my understanding of the beginning of the dispensation of grace. The beauty of more consistent dispensationalism was that I could truly allow the Bible to say what it meant for whom it was meant. Peter was speaking to a Jewish audience and fulfilling Old Testament Jewish prophecy in Acts 2. Being prophecy, it couldn't have been mystery. It was not the Body where Jewishness lost its distinction, Gal. 3:28. That truth was only revealed to Paul, Eph. 3:4-7.

In Eph. 4:4-6, I needed to come to grips that “one” meant *one* and that it applied to all seven things identified as *one* in the context. The words “unity”, “bond” and “peace” in v. 3 were words of oneness that set the stage for the seven *ones* in the next three verses. Verse 4 bluntly tells us there is but *one* Body as confirmed in 1Cor. 12:13. There is *one* Spirit, the Holy Spirit. And there is *one* hope.

In v. 5 we have three more truths of oneness we are to preserve. We have *one* Lord, and Jesus reminded us we can’t serve two! There is *one* faith. That’s one body of truth to maintain. Then *one* baptism. None of these have a physical focus. We may think of our Lord as physical, for He truly was perfect God and perfect man while walking the earth, but 2 Cor. 5:16 tells us that now the flesh is not how we know Him. We have a spiritual relationship and rejoice in it!

And there is but *one* God, v. 6. There is one God in three persons, not three ‘gods’ as in some religions. Each member of the Godhead is mentioned in this list of ones.

Each of these seven are to be celebrated. But each needs to be understood the way the author intended. While God is unchangeable, the truth of the Body is new. While hope and faith and baptism can be found elsewhere in Scripture, they each have a different meaning in this context. Our hope is eternal in the heavens, 2 Cor. 5:1, not a kingdom on earth like the disciples were seeking in Acts 1:6. The faith we hold has added revelation from God about who we are and what we are to do in this dispensation of grace, Eph. 3:1-11. And the *one* baptism is not the various baptisms—plural—required under law, Heb. 9:10.

When I first understood there is only one baptism, and that it is the Spirit’s work, I didn’t know what to do with water baptism. Maybe I feared losing something or disturbing passages like Matt. 28:19. But Paul didn’t fear that since he wrote in 1 Cor. 1:17 that Christ didn’t send him to baptize, even though it’s in direct contrast to Jesus’ command to His disciples in Matt. 28. God gave Paul different marching orders than the 12 apostles!

Such changes are consistent with God’s dealings with man throughout human history which we have identified as dispensations. Anyone reading the first few chapters of Genesis knows it was vastly different for man in the garden



than out. It's easy to see the changes to man's diet from strictly vegetarian, Gen. 1:29, to meat, Gen. 9:3, restricted to certain meats, Deut. 14:7, to now freedom to eat anything with thanksgiving, 2Tim. 4:4. For we are not under law, but grace, Rom. 6:14-15. Of course, there are other changes, but the point is that we follow the latest rule or revelation. I rejoice that I can eat bacon and shellfish. In fact, I'd like to glory in bacon-wrapped scallops more than my budget allows!

So, what is the latest rule or revelation on baptism? It is one. It is spiritual. It is part of our completeness in Christ, Col. 2:9-10. How can we not glory in our completeness in the complete Christ where nothing is missing and nothing can be added? We are in Christ by the one baptism and in Him we are absolutely complete.

That completeness includes spiritual circumcision, Col.2:11. Because of legalists pushing Jewish circumcision as in Acts 15:1, Paul wanted these Gentile believers to know that they weren't missing anything like physical circumcision because they were complete in Christ.

The same is true with baptism in Col. 2:12. This isn't a command to be water baptized, nor direction on how water baptism should be performed. In fact, it is not about water at all, just as the circumcision was not about human hands, v. 11. It is the spiritual "operation" of God that is part of our absolute completeness. We're so complete that we are identified with the death and resurrection of Christ in "the baptism". In the original, the article "the" is with the word baptism and is singular just as it is in Rom. 6:1-11 which also teaches our identity with Christ and His death, burial and resurrection.

There is but one baptism that identifies us with Christ and it is the one baptism of Eph. 4:5. It is the baptism in which we should glory because it is the cross work in which Paul gloried, Gal. 6:14.

Join me in rejoicing in God's design of oneness, the finished work of the cross of our Wonderful Savior and the work of the Holy Spirit! ♦

BEREAN BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

54th Annual Summer Conference



GOD'S PROPHETIC PROMISE

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HARDWIRED FOR HOPE

Timothy Board, TCM Development Director

*Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing
of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*

Titus 2:13 NKJV

Our hearts are hardwired by God for hope! This eager anticipation of future good is the daily pulse of our lives. Hope is also defined as ***“confident expectation of a guaranteed result that changes the way we live”*** (Paul David Tripp, *New Morning Mercies*). Despite this reality, our hearts are always in danger of growing cold and wallowing in despair as a result of losing sight of what we have been made for: to *“rejoice in hope of the glory of God”* (Rom.5:2). Since our hearts have indeed been hard-wired by God for hope, what is it that you are looking forward to with eager anticipation? The late Howard Hendricks said, “When your memories of the past are more exciting than your dreams for the future, you’ve begun to die.”

Theologically, for the Jews in time past, the hope of Israel’s redemption was the advent (and 2nd coming) of Messiah in fulfillment of prophecy in order to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth. For the Body of Christ in the dispensation of grace today, the Blessed Hope of the Church is the secret coming of Christ in the heavens to rapture, or catch us away, and bring us home to Himself in glory. **Are you looking forward to this with “expectation of a guaranteed result that changes the way you live?”** Have you taken ownership of the Blessed Hope in the depths of your soul, by the grace of God? Or has your heart grown cold in the depths of despair?

HISTORICAL & BIBLICAL CONTEXT

The historical narratives of Holy Scripture transpired in real time and space not in a mythological land of fairy tales. Due to cultural secularization though, we are prone to relegate these events to a time *“Long ago in a galaxy far far away...”* or to the worlds of Middle Earth, Narnia, or Never Never Land. Thanks be to God that His Word does not begin with *“Once upon a time...”* and does not end with *“...and they lived happily ever after.”* Instead, the Scriptures open with *“In the beginning God...”* and close with *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”*

The light of the gospel of grace first infiltrated the pagan darkness of the continent of Europe in the ancient city of Thessalonica, in the region of Macedonia north of Greece, during Apostle Paul’s second missionary journey (ca. A.D. 48/49-51). Paul’s gospel ministry upon entrance into a city was consistently characterized by revival and riot, and Thessalonica was not excluded (Acts 17:1-9).



Subsequent to establishing the Thessalonian church, Paul wrote two epistles

to further establish this assembly in the faith lest their hearts be subverted by doubts ensuing from persecution and the death of loved ones in Christ. Both letters focus on the Blessed Hope of the Church, the Body of Christ, otherwise known as the Pre-Tribulational Rapture. This event is where our exalted Head, Christ Himself, will come back for His own and catch us away into Heaven to be with Him forever. It is also the time when every member of the Church will give an account of their gospel stewardship responsibility before the Lord and receive



their reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Blessed hope indeed (Titus 2:11-15)!

THE BLESSED HOPE OF THE CHURCH

Ignorance of Blessed Hope – 1 Thes.4:13 cf. 1 Cor.15:16-19

As their spiritual father in the faith, Apostle Paul was deeply concerned that the Thessalonian saints be firmly established in the truth, lest their hearts and lives be taken captive by the diabolically insidious nature of the enemy's deception that this world is all there is and physical death is the end. Unfortunately, in the modern era, biblical ignorance amongst the general public is an increasing trend in contrast to generations gone by. Of far greater significance is the biblical and doctrinal ignorance pervasive within the Church, as multitudes lack knowledge of and familiarity with the text and teaching of Scripture. When professing Christians are not familiar with the comprehensive nature of the Christian worldview rooted in Holy Scripture, it is not surprising that they are ignorant of divine wisdom or the application of biblical knowledge and teaching to life. If Paul had anything to do with it, the testimony of these Thessalonian Christians would be different.

Foundation of Blessed Hope – 1 Thes.4:14 cf. Eph.1:12-14

The power of God to salvation in the gospel of Christ is the foundation of blessed hope. Our Savior transforms lives today, as He did with the Thessalonians, by grace through faith alone in His death, burial, and resurrection. This rock of salvation is the gospel of the grace of God which the risen Lord Jesus Christ entrusted to and through Apostle Paul in contrast to the gospel of the kingdom preached during Jesus' earthly ministry to the nation of Israel and during the early Acts period.

As a result of the Rock of Ages' faithfulness to the promises of His Word, members of the Church, the Body of Christ, possess the rock of assurance that He

will fulfill His perfect plan. We confidently anticipate the full redemption of the purchased possession of His people, dead or alive, when Christ delivers us from the very presence of sin in the resplendent glory of Heaven.

Expectation of Blessed Hope – 1 Thes.4:15 cf. Phil.3:20-21

Paul's apostolic authority to proclaim divine revelation and the unsearchable riches of Christ was given to him by the risen Savior Himself. God's servants preach God's Word because God's truth is unchanged and unchanging regardless of what progressive liberals and secular humanists assert about so-called cultural relevance. As Voddie Baucham once said, a preacher does not write the mail but delivers it after it arrived at his home first.

According to the revelation of the mystery, the secret coming of Christ at the end of the current dispensation of the grace of God is an imminent event not preceded by "times and seasons" like the second coming of Christ to the earth in fulfillment of prophecy. Understanding the differences between the Mystery and Prophetic Programs of God, afforded Paul confidence in the realistic possibility and eager anticipation of seeing his Savior return during his lifetime. Hence the old adage, "Perhaps today!"

Since Christ did not return during Paul's lifetime, he and all members of the Church who have physically died and are described as "asleep" will be at the front of the line when Christ does come back at the end of this age of grace. At this historic event, there will be a prescribed unfolding of the details since God does all things decently and in order and He is not the author of confusion (1 Cor.14:33a, 40).

Leadership of Blessed Hope – 1 Thes.4:16 cf. 1 Cor.15:51-55

As the Exalted Head of the Church, which is His Body, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will lead the covert operation through enemy territory to extract His ambassadors before resuming His dealings with Israel, which begins with Daniel's long foretold 70th week and the outpouring of His wrath according to prophecy. Christ's ultimate leadership will be accompanied by angelic emissaries of Yahweh at His beck and call on that glorious day. First, deceased believers will readily heed the voice of God and rise from the dead, because when the Almighty speaks, the dead come to life (Jn.11:25). Christ will reunite their souls and spirits with their newly resurrected, glorified physical bodies. They, along with living believers in transformed, glorified bodies, will ascend to meet the Savior as He sovereignly carries out His plan for the Church (1 Thes.3:13; 2 Cor.5:8).



Joy of Blessed Hope – 1 Thes.4:17 cf. Col.3:1-4

Paul eagerly expected to be physically alive at the Rapture of the Church and anticipated all living and previously deceased members being caught up or raptured together in the clouds. This imminent hope and joy of being reunited with family and friends in Christ, along with the saints of old and

heroes of the faith, is an objective reality because such confidence is focused on the preeminence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whereas happiness is temporal, circumstantial, and fleeting, a joy-filled heart that radiates from the countenance is an enduring promise of God because of the ever-present reality of who Christ is, what He has done, and what He will do in the future.

Encouragement of Blessed Hope – 1 Thes.4:18 cf. Titus 2:11-15

Having endured substantial adversity for the cause of Christ and uncertainty about the future destiny of those in their local church who had died, these comforting words from God through Apostle Paul were exactly what the Thessalonians needed. Our hearts always need the encouragement of sweet fellowship with family and friends in Christ, and the confidence of anticipating those times is a healing balm and anchor to the soul in times of distress.

Every member of the Body of Christ, has a stewardship responsibility before God to invest “this day” in light of “that day” by encouraging one another and by faithfully pointing others to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God. May our hardwired hope in Christ’s return for His Church fan into flame our obedience to Apostle Paul’s admonition: ***Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord*** (1 Cor.15:58). ❖



TCM ESTABLISHES MANILA MISSION HOUSE

In addition to our USA headquarters in Indianapolis, TCM has established a new mission headquarters in Manila in cooperation with TCM-Philippines. The **Manila Mission House** will serve as a Southeast Asia base for our International Director and as an office for the TCM-Philippines Mission Department. Currently 76% of our TCM missionaries are Filipinos, so the Manila Mission House will also be a place for them to stay when they travel to the capital city to process visa applications or when they pass through on home assignment.

Our investment in a decent property to be used by both TCM-USA and the TCM-Philippines Mission Department speaks volumes about our commitment to mission and our commitment to the TCM-Philippines Grace churches. The

Philippines easily has the largest number of Grace churches in the world and has reached the Partner stage of TCM's Troas Strategy. The 600+ TCM-Philippines churches have formed a Mission Department and are actively training, sending and supporting missionaries. Director Nabus affirms, "The Mission Department has become an institution in TCM-Philippines. It is permanent."

James & Agape Bermejo, Pastor Gerson & (son) Libni Bermejo and Philippines Mission Director Buddy Nabus visit Manila Mission House



The greater Manila area has a population of over 24 million, making it the fourth largest urban area in the world. There are 23 TCM Grace churches in this region, and their recent 44th anniversary celebration was attended by over 700 members. This makes Manila a strategic location for the Mission House. We settled on the Bacoor area in southern Metro-Manila due to its

accessibility to the international airport, the Bacoor Grace Gospel Church, and the homes of retired long-time TCM-Philippines Mission Department Director, Pastor Gerson Bermejo, and current Director, Pastor Buddy Nabus.

We praise the Lord for faithful donations by TCM friends to the "Where Needed" fund that enabled our cash purchase of the 4-bedroom townhouse. We believe this is a worthy use of these funds since TCM-Philippines has a proven track record of producing and supporting TCM missionaries. Every month the TCM-Philippines churches send thousands of dollars to provide their share of support to the Team missionaries.

We also believe this is a sound financial investment because property values in the Manila area have tripled in the last 10 years and are continuing to increase. Per the Memo of Understanding drawn up between TCM-USA and TCM-Philippines, TCM-USA retains control of the disposition of the property so can decide to sell it at any time should the need arise. The Manila Mission House is incorporated under TCM-Philippines and will be managed by the Mission Department, while TCM-USA will cover the maintenance expenses.

Rejoice with us in the Lord's guidance and provision in establishing the Manila Mission House! It is already being put to good use (despite being only partially furnished—see "How Can I Help?" p. 23) and we trust it will facilitate the furtherance of mission work in Southeast Asia and around the world. ❖



Manila Mission House

TCM WELCOMES A NEW MISSIONARY!



Sokney "Chetra" Hong is a Cambodian from a very strong Buddhist family. Chetra himself was very committed to his family's religion and served as a Buddhist monk for 5 years from 2006 to 2011. Although he loved everything about Buddhism and thought he was a noble man with few, if any sins, he sometimes wondered, "What is the purpose of my existence?"

In 2012, Chetra started a job teaching in a language school where he was required to join a weekly Bible study. He started learning about the God of the Bible, and his students tried to share the good news of Jesus Christ with him. However, Chetra resisted their efforts because Buddhism still meant everything to him, and he couldn't imagine losing the most precious thing in his life. Deep down in his heart though, there was an emptiness seeking to be filled.

Julia Liles enrolled in the language school where Chetra was working in 2017. She shared many Bible verses with him and persistently invited him to church. When he finally agreed to attend a service, Pastor James Bermejo's preaching answered the questions in his heart about the Bible. By October 2018 Chetra realized he was a sinner who needed to be saved, and he personally accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior.



Since then, Chetra has completed the Cambodia Grace Gospel Church's Pastoral Ministry Mentoring Course. He and Julia were married in the UK in April 2022. In June they moved to the Philippines to attend TCM's 2-month intensive Grace Theological Center for Mission, followed by a year of Bible school training for Chetra and teaching for Julia at the Tagum campus of International Grace Bible Institute. Chetra has inspired and motivated his fellow students through his thirst for understanding the Scriptures and his insightful questions. On Sundays, Chetra and Julia have visited several TCM churches in the area where Chetra has been invited to preach.

In January 2023, TCM accepted Chetra and Julia as a missionary couple and assigned them to serve in Cambodia. They anticipate returning to ministry there after attending the Southeast Asia Grace Conference. ❖



Cambodia



LEAPING TO THE NEED

Julia Liles-Hong

When my cell phone was out of action, Chetra found a man to replace the screen so it's up and running again. He also saved the little phone shop from burning down! I'm thankful to God we were there! The two employees had wandered off whilst we were waiting inside. All of a sudden, some electrical equipment sparked into flames! Things were melting and the smoke was crazy! Chetra leapt into action to put out the fire and threw a melting, flaming chair out the door. He said afterwards, as we stood outside to let the smoke exit the small shop, "If I see something is wrong, I can't walk away. I have to fix it!"

It immediately made me think of this broken hurting world. So many walk away from the hard work or even fear the danger of sharing the Good News that can save it. But we won't! It was a special reminder to my heart of the man God has blessed me with, and how he responds readily to a need. ❖

GOODBYE BRAZIL ▶▶▶ HELLO TIMOR

After 29 years of faithful service, Gomer and Nene Indino bid farewell to their ministry in Brazil. TCM has released the South Brazil field into the capable hands of the Brazilian MCP leaders. The Indinos are currently in the Philippines on home assignment before departing to join TCM's ministry in East Timor. They need your prayers!



South Brazil

FOLLOWING ON . . .

- ◆ **Mel & Freda Guimba** are in the Philippines where Freda's Stage 4 kidney disease continues to be assessed and treated.
- ◆ **Robby & Tegwen Heath** and their 3 children are in the USA for home assignment until December.
- ◆ **James & Agape Bermejo** have arrived back in Cambodia and are settled in a new place. Their ministry focus is training and mentoring.
- ◆ **Roland & Beverly Improso** are expecting their first child after waiting and hoping through 13 years of marriage.

- ◆ **Genesis & Verna Mara** hope to visit the USA from June to December if they can get a visa. They plan to meet with the TCM board, visit churches/supporters and welcome their first grandchild.
- ◆ **Pat & Michelle Kilgo** will be in the USA in June-July for their daughter, Elisabeth's marriage to pastoral intern Daniel Garcia.
- ◆ **Ben & Joyce Anderson** will be in the USA in June-July for a TCM board meeting and family reunion.

MEMORIAL GIFTS



JESSIE PALMER EASTERLY
Tyler & Amanda Palmer

HAZEL LAW
Sandra Kilgo

PAUL RICHMOND
Aileen Richmond

**WILLIAM & VIRGINIA
ROBBINS**
Estate Legacy

HENRY & ELLEN RYKE
*Charitable Foundation for
Muskegon County*

MARTHA ROSE SELLEN
Pastor Roger Sellen

JOE WATKINS
Thomas & Janith Upshaw

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Things to Come Mission prepares people for Jesus Christ's return through the methods of the Apostle Paul by sending missionaries to evangelize, plant churches and train leaders worldwide. Our financial support comes from free will gifts of churches and individuals. Things to Come Mission will disburse gifts as they are designated. When a project is complete, TCM will disburse the gifts in a manner consistent with its mission statement and purpose. As a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization, TCM issues tax-deductible receipts for all donations.

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HOW CAN I HELP?

FURNISH MANILA MISSION HOUSE

Praise the Lord for provision to purchase the Manila Mission House that will function as an apartment for the International Director, a guest house for missionaries and an office for the TCM-Philippines Mission Department. Ben & Joyce Anderson donated furnishings from their former Manila apartment, and the TCM-Philippines Mission Department is furnishing the



missionary guest rooms. The following appliances and furnishings are still needed:

Refrigerator (\$550), Stove with installation and gas cylinder (\$600), Water cooler/dispenser (\$310), Dining table & six chairs (\$700), Washing machine (\$380), Office air conditioner (\$750), Office desk and chair (\$250), Living room chairs and coffee table (\$400), Shelves for office and pantry (\$200).

Total Need: \$4140

Designate Donations: Manila Mission House



KGBI GRAD BOOK SETS

"Many people are hungry for Bibles and good Grace literature," reports Kenya Grace Bible Institute teacher, Joyce Anderson. "The Bibles being used and shared looked like scraps. I purchased Bibles, and students had to do some memory work to earn them. The students were clamoring to earn their Bibles. The first student who came to me said he had been struggling so much because he needed a Bible.

With eyes watering, he grasped his new Bible and asked,

"Can I put my name in it?!" I told the students these Bibles are to be used for the 3 years they attend KGBI. When they graduate, each one will receive a new Bible with maps and a concordance—something to work toward."

Each book set includes: Study Bible (\$25), *Dispensational Theology* (\$25), *Things That Differ* and *Basic Bible Doctrines* (TCM thanks Berean Bible Society for donating the last two).

Need: Book sets for 13 graduates.

Designate Donations: KGBI Book Sets

ANDERSON SEMINARY PROJECTS

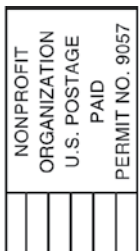
Fifty years ago Vernon & Darlene Anderson established a vibrant ministry in Indonesia which continues to flourish with 64 churches, several pioneering areas and an accredited Bible college. In honor of the Andersons, the Grace Bible Churches of Indonesia named their college *Anderson Theological Seminary (STTAM)*. TCM invested over \$30,000 to construct a building to house an auditorium and library. Although the building is already in daily use by the faculty and 60 students, some small projects need to be completed.



- Outside Floors \$1000
- Windows and Doors \$768
- Ceiling \$2050
- Support Pillars \$1145
- Toilets \$275
- Drainage \$980

- Water Tower \$980
- Library Room \$980
- Bookcases \$1305
- Misc/Other \$490

Designate Donations: STTAM Indonesia



International Harvest



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Southeast Asia

GRACE CONFERENCE

May 25-29, 2023



\$195

4 nights hotel
meals & snacks
conference facilities
airport to hotel
Cebu City Tour

URGENT MISSION

Redeeming the Time

"Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."

Crown Regency Hotel
Cebu City, Philippines