THE VOICE NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER – PASTOR TERRY REESE

A Theme for our Time: The Fear of the Lord (Part I)

"The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, that one may avoid the snares of death."

In considering the contradictions of the late eighteenth century, Dickens famously observed: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness… we had everything before us, we had nothing before us…" (A Tale of Two Cities) The above could just as easily have been written of our own era! We bear constant witness to the phenomenon of the entire global culture being carefully groomed and deliberately cultivated for the post-rapture unveiling of the Beast (2Thess. 2:7-8, Rev. 13:7-8)—even as the vestiges of historic Christian civilization steadily retreat beneath a cruel and chaotic tsunami of postmodern/post-Christian apostasy. And yet, far from crumbling in despair, we as a fundamental Grace Brethren Fellowship must recognize that we have been granted the awesome privilege of standing boldly as a faithful remnant-witness for Jesus Christ during a supremely pivotal hour of Earth's history!

This present hour of darkness is laden with enormous opportunity for our torches to blaze with a fierce intensity for Jesus this Conference Year of 2026-27 (Matt. 5:14-16)! The CGBCI has been re-ignited over the years by many soul-stirring and enduring National Conference themes, including the last two: "Aspire to Something Higher" and "Jesus and the CGBCI"—which sought to shake us out the smug and self-satisfied spirit of complacency and mediocrity to which flesh often resigns. Seeking to build upon this thematic foundation, I have chosen as our 2027 Conference Theme "FEAR: a Fountain of Life" (Prov. 14:27a). The aforementioned "FEAR" is the Fear of the Lord— a prevailing and pervasive theme throughout both Testaments, and one that God Himself thunderously underscored at the outset of both the Mosaic (Lev. 10:1-3) and Church Age (Acts 5:1-11) Dispensations—and yet, a theme that has been notably underplayed and de-emphasized within much of today's popular evangelicalism.

In considering the theological significance and practical application of this theme, let us entertain a few questions with regard to some of the nagging difficulties facing the modern church:

- WHY are there so many petty disturbances and divisions over trifles within our local assemblies? WHY is the peace of God's church often lightly regarded as an optional and therefore disposable commodity?
- WHY do our churches—via their cruelty, insensitivity, impiety, irreverence, and slander—sometimes function as factories that specialize in manufacturing stumbling blocks for others to injure themselves upon (Matt. 18:7)?

- WHY do our crude business meetings sometimes devolve into primitive law-of-the-jungle displays of boorish behavior that earn a well-deserved public notoriety (Rom. 2:24)?
- WHY do so many professed Christians frown upon meaty, doctrinal sermons that call upon them to THINK and take the Biblical theology seriously?
- WHY does a goodly portion of church people blasphemously assume that God was lacking in common sense when He gave us a deep and voluminous collection of inspired Books that He further calls upon us to imbibe and absorb with uttermost diligence?
- WHY does contemporary self-styled "evangelicalism" now allow a plethora of ridiculous major heresies to flourish within the perimeters of its "Big Tent"? Open Theism? Annihilationism? Theistic Evolution? "Neo-orthodox" denials of absolute Biblical inerrancy?
- WHY do we find it difficult to focus upon or find satisfaction in the reverent and sincere worship of God in our midst?
- WHY is the focus in ministry and outreach today too often upon self and our "felt-needs"—as opposed to the glory of God?
- WHY is postmodern evangelicalism increasingly comfortable with a reduced and emasculated—even feminized—version of Deity?
- WHY is hellfire preaching that warns of final judgment (like that of Jesus in Matt. 25:41, 46) increasingly seen as a lapse into "poor taste?"
- WHY would many people who attend evangelical churches choose to find solace in the mindless milquetoast ramblings of Joel Osteen—as opposed to tuning into the messages of Dr. Whitcomb (easily accessible on sermonaudio.com)?
- WHY are the lifestyle standards of the Christians largely imperceptible from the prevailing ethos of the surrounding culture (Rom. 12:2)?
- WHY is there a rebellious contempt for pastoral authority (even regarding the management of the pulpit and the worship service), infidelity regarding weekly attendance, and basic indifference towards the organized program and agenda of the local church?
- WHY does the expression "a God-fearing man" seem so oddly antiquated to this generation (Gen. 22:12, Job 1:8)? Should we apologize for employing such terminology, which is at odds with the "spirit of the age?"

In summing it up: this generation isn't believing the right things. We aren't doing the right things. We are apathetic to the revealed will of God and indifferent to Biblical guidance. Our worship is unfocused and misdirected. We have unbiblical conceptions of Deity and the Afterlife. In short, things are getting pretty "messed up." Might I have the temerity to suggest a common denominator? Could it be a deficiency regarding the FEAR OF THE LORD? A lack of reverence and awe concerning the Divine Presence? A disregard for a Holy, transcendent, infinite God? A misapprehension of who God is, and what He is? A lack of sensitivity to His omnipresent pervasiveness and continuing sustaining influence? A casual dismissal of those consequences associated with not fearing that which God Himself has plainly told us we should fear? A greater fear of man, as opposed to One that Jesus told us that we should fear (Matt. 10:28)?

This alarming shift in the church's understanding and attitude that has not occurred overnight; rather, it has discernably been developing for centuries. As we further explore this topic and study together, I have provided a brief list of recommended materials:

- Albert N. Martin. The Forgotten Fear: Where have all the God-Fearers Gone? Note the title of Dr. Martin's book, which speaks of the present evangelical crisis. The book is available at Amazon both in Kindle and paperback formats. An audio lecture series that closely follows Dr. Martin's book is freely available both at Monergism.com (https://www.monergism.com/fear-god-lecture-series) and sermonaudio.com. Written transcripts of the audio series are also available (https://www.sg-audiotreasures.org/am_fear.htm)
- Robert A. Morey & Charles Welty compiled an excellent and uncompromising study entitled Fearing God: The Key to the Treasure House of Heaven. This book includes Bunyan's The Fear of God, Gill's The Fear of God, and Edwards' Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. While no longer in print, used versions can be found at various places online. A PDF version can be freely accessed at Internet Archive by simply registering for a free account. (https://archive.org/details/fearinggodkeytot0000more/page/n7/mode/2up)

Until next time, brothers and sisters, may our Lord strive with you all, and multiply His grace and mercies!

BEREAN FAITH FELLOWSHIP

Though the saints at Berean Fatih Fellowship remain faithful to the Lord, services, and each other, we constantly pray for a permanent God called CGBCI pastor in the pulpit each week. If you are the one, or you know of one, please contact Pastor Jeff Eno at pastorjeffeno@hotmail.com or 740-403-1951 to discuss. Above all, pray for us, brethren!

NEW BEGINNINGS CHURCH – PASTOR JOE ENSLEY

We had a combination Three-fold communion service along with five believers getting baptized. It was a great time of fellowship and sharing. The Lord provided us with perfect weather for our great event.

NEW TROY GBC – PASTOR ROBERT MENSINGER

God is continuing to bless here at New Troy. Our attendances and offerings have been holding up well despite our small numbers.

My wife Lila has been taken off her keytruda infusions because of some serious side-effects. They have put her on Prednisone which is helping quite a bit. She will soon go back to see her oncologist. Please continue to pray for brother Curtis Smith, Bill Gooding, Nancy Knapp, and Mindy Burns. Bill has an upcoming open-heart surgery in early October.

Pastor Ron Welsh is doing a study now on adversity which a lot of us have been going through. He has returned to substitute teaching to supplement his income but is seeking something more substantial. Pastor Bob is now in chapter eighteen of Revelation and the series is going very well.

My Brother Eddie Mensinger was here on Sunday, August 30 to preach for the morning service. We had thirty people (including five visitors) in attendance and sixteen stayed for the pot-luck dinner after the morning service. Thanks for your prayers and support through all of this.

NATIONAL EVANGELISM TEAM (NET) – PASTOR DEL & GRACE MILLER

Thanks for uplifting NET 26 in your prayers. Following are some comments from team members about their experience on NET 26. As you think of the churches in PA where we reached out, continue praying for the people that we contacted. We were in Somerset, Kittanning and Armagh.

"Singing is a big part of NET, and while many of the songs we sing for the programs are enjoyable, a highlight for me over the years, and this year is no exception, has been when we just spontaneously sing whatever songs we know the lyrics to, whether in the van, in the exit corridor at North Buffalo GBC, or some other place. Those times are always just really fun!" (Jethro Geiser)

"One of my highlights from NET 26 was the fellowship we shared as a team. This year, especially, I feel like the team members bonded together quickly. It's an uplifting time being with like-minded believers!" (Silas McAllister)

"This year's NET trip really encouraged me. God has been teaching me to trust Him completely and He consistently spoke that message through experiences on NET. In our team devotions I was reminded of the verse, 'Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.' As we discussed the verse, I realized God instructs us to thank Him for how He has helped us before so that we remember His faithfulness and His capability. I've started to remember to pray whenever I was anxious." (Micah McAllister)

Thanks to all of the team for their clear desire to cooperate diligently in the work of the Lord!
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Grace FOR LIVING

Thank you to all who have been supporting this ministry. If you haven't checked out Grace for Living online, you can view it at https://www.cgbci.org/grace-for-living.

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