

Prologue

Living Water

*“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life,
as clear as crystal,
flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb....”*

(Revelation 22:1a)

I feel your rain upon my face,
It tells me of your loving grace.
You water all that’s here below,
Making food and flowers grow.
Living Water—Living Water!

Your river flows across my life,
Washing sin away and strife.
Strong and clear you bring me through,
The years and work you give to do.
Living Water—Living Water!

You lead beside still water, too,
When I’m in doubt and need of you.
You calm my mind and frightened heart,
When I’m alone and in the dark.
Living Water—Living Water!

From deep inside you bring a cup,
Of Living Water to fill me up.
Refresh me so I’ll never fall,
Never need to thirst at all.
Living Water—Living Water!

Salty tears inside your sea,
Bottled there to comfort me.
The ocean’s wide, but I’m not alone,
Living Water will bring me home.

2021

Vaccination

and

Navigation

Part I

“And the Lord answered me:

‘Write the vision;

make it plain on tablets so he may run who reads it.”

(Habakkuk 2:2) (RSV)

From Grandpa With Love

A Personal Note

2021 began with a sense of hope and comfort. Vaccines for the deadly Covid Pandemic that devastated the world in 2020 were developed in record time by the Trump administration, and administered by President Biden to millions of anxious recipients. This started to bring us a nationwide sigh of relief as closed businesses, masks, social distancing, and months of isolation and economic tumult began to be more of a memory than a current reality. Or so we thought, until the new Delta strain appeared. Now the specter has raised its head again.

Our concerns have grown as we watched the new administration in Washington D.C. give and spend trillions of dollars by printing paper money; and then try to “*transform*” our country into their version of an Orwellian Utopia, while millions pour over our southern border, Afghanistan explodes and China, Russia and Iran flex their muscles. Much like the “*The Gathering Storm*” written by Winston Churchill to describe the 1930’s just before the eruption of World War II.

Reviewing what has been happening took me back to World War II and learning to Navigate for the Air Force. We were taught to start by knowing where we were and where we wanted to go. The trip itself was constantly checking to see how the wind was blowing us off course. Then we could turn and get back on the right heading.

In retrospect, 2021 appears to have been a combination of the life-saving gift of **Vaccination** mixed with the need for **Navigation** to help us stay on course through the winds and unexpected storms.

The writings in this little booklet are some of the articles God gave me to send to Friends and Family during 2021. Additional articles are at fromgrandpawithlove.com. Hopefully, they lead us toward some of the eternal, Biblical truths that are helpful in every time in history, rather than centering all our thoughts on the biased news that constantly blares at us from competing individuals and organizations.

As always, remember, these are just one old man’s thoughts. So hold onto what is good (of God)—and discard the rest.

From Grandpa With Love

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*What gate have you opened?
What road are you on?
What seeds have you planted,
To grow when you're gone?
Are you building your house,
On the rock or the sand?
Oh, come now to Jesus,
Take hold of His hand!*

#1

Are We In A Hezekiah Era?

“Will there not be peace and security in my lifetime?”

Throughout History there have life-changing Eras. We noted in an earlier writing that these often seem to come in approximately 15year periods. For example, the “Wild West” began shortly after the Civil War in 1865 and was basically completed around 1880. The Great Depression and WWII Era began about 1930 and it was over by 1945. Similarly, the journeys of the Apostle Paul were believed to have occurred roughly between the mid 40’s and about 60 A.D.—but the events during those few years changed the world!

Now, I am wondering, “Are we in a Hezekiah Era?”

Hezekiah was one of Israel’s early kings. His kingdom was about to be invaded by the Assyrians. The climax of his story appears in 2 Kings 20 which opens with these words: *“In those days Hezekiah became ill, and was at the point of death.”*, and explains how the prophet Isaiah told him,

“This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.”

But Hezekiah prayed. God heard him and promised:

*“I will add **fifteen years** to your life, and I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the King of Assyria. I will defend this city for my own sake, and for the sake of my servant David.”* (Emphasis added).

Later, Hezekiah was tempted by pride and showed emissaries from Babylon all the riches he had accumulated. When accosted by Isaiah, he confessed,

“‘They saw everything in my palace,’ ‘There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them.’”

Then Isaiah told him God’s verdict:

“The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the Lord. And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood that will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”

Hezekiah responded with some of the most selfish words in History:

***“The word of the Lord you have spoken is good,’
Hezekiah replied. For he thought,
‘Will there not be peace and security in my lifetime?’”***

Conclusion

We are now at a cross road. With the Pandemic, Economic and Racial Crises facing us, our nation must decide how we will proceed. I believe that not only our nation, but Western Civilization itself is under attack. Sadly, the whole world is increasingly turning a blind eye to those who follow us, and attempting to solve our immediate crises by dramatically increasing the already overwhelming multi-trillion dollar debt we are handing off to our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

At the same time, we are increasingly aware our families and other foundational institutions are floundering and in danger of collapse. Recent massive protests, with rioting and looting make it obvious change is on the horizon and we wonder, *What shape will it take? Will it be peaceful, or will we descend into the unthinkable nightmare of economic turbulence, violence and conflict?*”

Once again the issue raises its head in our generation and we must face the question:

***Will we follow Hezekiah, by seeking
15 years of ‘peace and prosperity’ in our lifetime?***

Or

***Will we follow Jesus, and take the Hard Road of sacrificial action?
I pray we follow Jesus!***

From Grandpa With Love

#2

Unity or Uniformity?

One of the great “*Duality Dilemmas*” in life is the issue of “*Unity and/or Uniformity*”. It faces every individual and every institution. And it is one of the most important and difficult decisions confronting the “United States of America” today.

**We want to be “United”,
but the lines are being drawn whether we should “unite”
through “*Unity or Uniformity*”?**

Set forth below are some distinctions I wrote in a “*Letter from Grandpa*”:

Unity emphasizes the *individual*
Uniformity emphasizes the *institution*

Unity puts *freedom* first
Uniformity puts *order* first

Unity comes because we *want to obey*
Uniformity comes because we *have to obey*

Unity requires *internal discipline*
Uniformity requires *external discipline*

Unity has an *invisible, Heavenly King*
Uniformity has *visible, worldly kings*

Unity is a *rainbow*
Uniformity is *one color*

Unity is *harmony*
Uniformity is *one note*

Unity is recognized by a *radiant countenance*
Uniformity is recognized by a *man-made uniform*

Unity is a *warm body*
Uniformity is a *cold machine*

Unity spreads through *relationships*
Uniformity suppresses through *rules*

Unity is based on *love*
Uniformity is based on *law*

**While some “form” is necessary,
the term “Uniformity” never appears in the Bible!**

I pray our Leaders will lean on the side of “Unity”

So we will stay “United”

As a Diverse Living Body

Rather than a Drab Collective Society.

*“How good and pleasant it is
when brothers live together in unity!”*

(Psalm 133:1)

From Grandpa With Love

#3

Whose Dictionary?

“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil...”

(Isaiah 5:20)

“Whoever owns the dictionary controls the debate”, one of our sons told me one day—and in today’s changing world, he seems to be right.

Our counter culture poses controversy after controversy: *Is Gender a Fact or a Choice? Is Marriage a Man and a Woman or two of the Same? Is Debt something to Maximize or Minimize? Is Government to Protect or Provide? Is Work an Option or a Necessity? Is Equity the same as Equality? Is Gambling a Crime or a Game? Is Unity the same as Uniformity?* The list goes on and on and seems to be endless. It is confusing and causing great concern among older folks who realize how fast the culture has been, and is, changing. And it is misleading younger people who never knew the words being used ever had another (often opposite) meaning.

Much of the history of our country can trace its origins to Biblical roots. Many of our laws, such as murder, manslaughter, theft, contracts, divorce and punitive damages are all discussed at length in the Scriptures. It is not only our laws, but our entire ethical culture which has been permeated by the principles of both the Old and New Testaments. The "Wisdom of Solomon," the "Good Samaritan," and principles such as the "Golden Rule" form a bedrock for the ethical values of our nation.

Notwithstanding our long history, there has been unleashed in recent years a broad-scale effort which seems designed to remove God from public expression. We are being increasingly told that religion is a private matter, and it is improper to speak or acknowledge our dependence upon God in the public arena. As we publicly separate ourselves from God and act independently of His moral principles, our Nation has become increasingly imperiled.

One result has been to give us conflicting Dictionaries. And each group believes *their Dictionary* is right!

About half of us, many of whom are older and/or living in the Heartland of our Nation still see life through the lens of a History, Culture and Tradition steeped in Biblical thought and language. It emphasizes the Individual and is based on Freedom.

The other half, many of whom are younger and/or located in heavy metropolitan areas who were raised in cultures that know little or nothing of the principles that have made the United States a leader and Beacon of Hope in the world for the last century, see life through an entirely different lens. They have increasingly turned away from God and the institutions of Family, Church, and Workplace. More and more, they ask and expect the one institution of Government to solve most problems. Their Dictionary emphasizes the Collective and is based on Force.

***We are now in a growing struggle to determine
which Dictionary shall prevail.***

***I pray God will give us all the insight, wisdom, courage and
endurance we need to stay the course and promote
His Values and His Kingdom***

As we move through this critical time in our Nation.

From Grandpa With Love

#4

The Church as a Family

*“For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven
is my brother and sister and mother.”*

(Matthew 12:50)

Our world is dividing. And we are being forced to review how we shall live in the institutions we call Family, Church, Workplace and Government. That has caused me to question what we mean when we use the word “*church*”. I am certainly not an “expert”, but I decided the times required I try and reach some conclusions.

Matthew was the only writer to record Jesus’ use of the term “*church*” in the Gospel accounts, and then only two times. The first (16:18) is to Peter at Caesarea Philippi: “*And I tell you, you are Peter (whose name apparently means “rock”) and on this rock I will build my church.*”

Some contend this means Peter would be the beginning of an “organized church”.

The other (18:17) refers to the last stage of trying to reconcile with someone who sins against you: “*If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.*”

This sounds as if “the people are the church”.

Jesus repeatedly indicated that His followers were His “*family*”. For example, Jesus refers to God as our “**Father**” ten times when He instructs on prayer and fasting in Matthew 6. This “*family relationship*” is also reinforced by passages such as Matthew 12:50 quoted above.

The Gospel accounts often used the Jewish relationship of “*rabbi*” and “*disciple*” when speaking of Jesus and those who followed Him. **But, after the Book of Acts, the Bible never uses the term “disciple”.**

Instead, the writers move to a **“family”** model. A good example is the Apostle John, who used both *“disciple”* and *“children”* in John 1, but in his Letters he repeatedly refers to *“believers”* as **“children (or Sons) of God”** and **“brother(s)”**, (e.g. See 1 John 3).

The Apostle Paul organized believers into more institutional structures at various locations, and he used the term, *“church”*, over forty times in his letters which were often directed to *“the church”* (i. e., the believers) in a city or area. While Paul gives many qualifications for church *“leaders”*, there is no record in the Bible of *“members”* in *“a church”*, nor what the qualifications would be for *“membership”* in *“a church”*. When the Bible speaks of *“members”* it refers to *“members of the body of Christ,”* e.g. eyes and ears. (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; See also Ephesians 2:19-22 and 4)

It appears the result was more of an organic organization (akin to a physical **“family”**) rather than a *legal entity* as most *“church”* groups are today (i.e. *“created”* by the State). The State grants unlimited life and limited liability which allow *“churches”* to become large, monolithic corporations. The price is the government can (and increasingly may) control what *“the churches”* can say and/or do.

As our nation moves toward suppression of views opposed to those in power, it seems likely many in the **“church family”** will decide to come together in small, unincorporated groups much more like those described in the New Testament.

When major disruptive events happen, everything changes. We don't get to return to the old ways because *“normal”* has changed. As we move into this new *“Post-Pandemic World”* we are going to have to determine once again, *“How shall we now live?”*

And that means adapting all our institutions of the Family, Church, Workplace and Government to meet this New World.

**I pray we will all make the right decisions—
Collectively and Individually!**

From Grandpa With Love

#5

Unlimited Life and Limited Liability

70 years ago, I was admitted to the practice of Law in Kansas. I started in a small two man firm, and the largest firm in Wichita was probably seven or eight attorneys. At that time, each lawyer was liable for the actions of his partners. The result was small firms and deep personal relationships. Firms often died as older partners passed on.

When lawyers were given the right to incorporate, firms began to grow. Today, the largest law firm now lists over 10,000 attorneys world-wide! Personal relationships have become intertwined with corporate responsibilities. Firms now continue without regard to the names or identities of the attorneys who continually move in and out as circumstances require.

I long ago retired from practicing law. But as I look back 70 years, I have been asking the question that faces all of us as we survey the Corporate World of Unlimited Life and Limited Liability that surrounds us:

Is God's Way Better?

Hebrews 9:27 tells us,

*“Just as man is destined to die once,
and after that to face judgment.”*

God, in His Wisdom, and aware of our fallen nature and the temptation to embezzle His Blessings of Pleasure, Possessions and Position/Power for our own benefit, placed two limitations on the Individuals *He* Creates:

- a) Each of us must die; and
- b) Each of us will be held responsible for our actions.

Around 1800, Man, in his “wisdom”, found a way to countermand God's design by exchanging the Government for God, making *it* the

“creator” of Institutions called “corporations” (and later referred to as “persons”), and removing both restraints so they would have:

- a) Unlimited Life; and
- b) Limited Liability, to protect the owners from personal responsibility.

The result has been a massive explosion of new development that has greatly benefited mankind, but with it a massive growth in the wealth and power of a few Individuals over the rest of society. We are suddenly aware that our corporations, (like Frankenstein’s Monster) may have become Masters that control us rather than shields that protect us.

Most recently we have been startled to discover some powerful, monolithic (and monopolistic) corporations have received almost total immunity through what is called Section 230. As a result, these companies have exercised power over even the President and other Officers of the United States by stopping them from communicating with their own constituents!

So let me close with this thought:

“We need to embrace the rhythms of life in all our institutions! Like individuals, they need to be born, grow up and produce, pass on to others and then fade away.

If we don’t let our institutions die, they will become our masters, instead of our servants!”

From Grandpa With Love

#6

Transforming America

*“Your kingdom come
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven”
(Matthew 6:10)*

I. Worldly Transformation

It is 2021, and we are suddenly faced with a New Congress and a New President who have announced a New Transformation Mission that we might translate as:

***“To use the force of law to ‘transform’ America
into the new rulers’ view of a just society.”***

It appears a New National Dictionary (using my “*loose*” definitions) has accompanied this Mission:

“Equity”—each person is guaranteed an equal outcome
“Woke”—Awake to racial and other injustice
“Systemic Racism”—Institutions favoring white people
“Critical Race Theory”—Academic theory about racism
“Unity”—Everybody supports the agenda of those in power
“Cancel Culture”—Ostracizing those who think differently

The goal to create a perfect society is commendable. It is also impossible. It has been man’s effort throughout history. But it always fails because “man” is imperfect, and imperfect men will never create a perfect society.

Only a perfect God can create a perfect society. And that is what Jesus offers to all who die to themselves and become One with Him and our Father and all the Saints in Heaven. (John 17:20-23; Ephesians 4:1-6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

II. Biblical “Transformation”

When God brings this world to completion, He is going to bring about the perfect Heavenly society described by the Apostle John in Revelation 11:15:

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever.”

In the meantime, we are urged to “*die to ourselves*” in this world and be “*born again*” into the Kingdom of God where we can “*shine like stars*” in our dark world. It is Christ-like lives that will attract others to do the same.

III. Conclusion

We do need “*transformation*”. But it is not an imperfect change enforced by those in power through an imperfect world government run by imperfect men. Rather, it is a “*transformation*” in which we voluntarily exchange our “*will*” for God’s “*will*” and the “*kingdom of the world*” for the “*Kingdom of God*”.

The more we each reflect the Kingdom of God in our Nation, the more our Nation will be the kind of “just” society we dream about. The Apostle Paul, in Galatians 3:28, paints a picture of the society we crave, without division based on *race, economics or gender*:

*“There is neither Jew nor Greek,
slave nor free, male nor female,
for you are all one in Christ”*

**We can be “transformed” into a just society—
Not because it is created and enforced by governmental order,
But because we become “One in Christ”!**

From Grandpa With Love

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world,
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.*

*Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—
his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2) (Emphasis added)*

#7

Age Ghettos

Our world is divided in many ways, e.g. Geography, Religion, Economics, Politics, etc. As I look down the ladder of life, I see one important way so ingrained in us that we seldom notice it: **Age Ghettos**. Children start early in Day Care, then Nursery School, Elementary School, Middle School, High School, College, followed by Young Married, Empty-Nesters, Retirement Communities and finally back to a Nursing Home Environment.

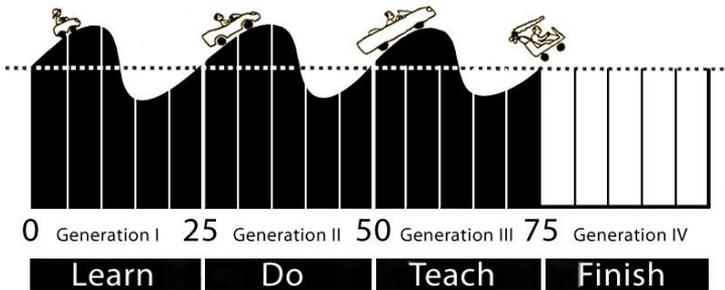
The View

Two weeks ago I attended my first family gathering since Covid began last year.. It was so healthy to have Youngsters from 3 months to Age 14, mixed with Parents in their 30's and 40's, Grandparents in their sixties and me bring up the rear at Age 95.

It made me acutely aware how much we all view everything from where we are in Life. It reminded me again how important it is to think of others' "Age View" when we talk together. I pray it will do the same for you.

AN OVERVIEW OF

"A JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE"



From Grandpa With Love

Generation I Age 0-25 “A Time to Learn”

(Child)

Age 0-7 “The Givens” “Bents” from those who lived before me

Age 7-12 “Childhood” “Values” from those who raised me

Age 12-18 “The Teens” “Choices” I make in my “Era”

Age 18-21 “Adventure” “Risk and Responsibility” = “Maturity”

Age 21-25 “Lifetime Decisions” “My Master, Mate and Mission”

Generation II Age 25-50 “A Time to Do”

(Parent)

Age 25-30 “Into the World” “Four Institutions”—“Where am I?”

Age 30-35 “On Our Own” A “High” as I “Do it my way”

Age 35-40 “Striving for Success” Defining/Seeking “Success”

Age 40-45 “Surrender” A “Low” as I “give up” and start fresh

Age 45-50 “A New Direction” “Going God’s way with His people”

Generation III Age 50-75 “A Time to Teach”

(Grandparent)

Age 50-55 “Harmony” “Knowing H/S and His Gifts”

Age 55-60 “Reaching Out” “Witnessing —Home/Ends of Earth”

Age 60-65 “Harvest Time” “Reaping”/ “How Much is Enough?”

Age 65-70 “Passing the Baton” “Releasing Control” and
“Dealing With Retirement”

Age 70-75 “Be Ready” Getting prepared to “Finish the Race”

Generation IV Age 75-Onward “A Time to Finish”

(Great Grandparent)

Age 75-80 “Onward and Upward” “Out of the World” and “Up”

Age 80-85 “Letting Go” “Giving up Everything”

Age 85-On “Finishing the Race” “Loving and Receiving Love”

#8

Sacrificial Love

I was nearing my 65th birthday (1990) and thinking about retirement and what I was to do with the rest of my life. On May 7, I was awakened by a clear voice saying:

“Your assignment for the rest of your life is simply to love people and to love me.”

I asked, “Is that you, Lord?” and it was repeated.

I think he placed “*people*” first for me, because it had been easier for me to love a perfect God whom I had not seen, than it was to love others who, like me, were imperfect and harder to love.

When Jesus was asked, “*Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?*” he replied:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like it:

‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

(Matthew 22:36-40 Emphasis added)

“*The Law*” and “*the Law and the Prophets*” refer to the **Old Testament**. It “**commands**” us to love as we want to be loved and has become known as “*The Golden Rule*”, and we are the standard.

But, in John 13:34-35 Jesus gave us a “**New Commandment**” for His New Covenant (Testament) followers:

“A new command I give you. Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know you are my disciples if you love one another.”

By these few words, Jesus changed the standard from loving as we want to be loved, to loving as He has loved us! Now we have an

entirely “New Standard”, who is Jesus. As the Apostle John explained in 1 John 3:16,

*“This is how we know what love is:
Jesus Christ laid down His life for us.
And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”*

This same theme permeates the rest of the New Testament. (E.g. Luke 9:23-24; John 15:12; Romans 12:1; Matthew 10:38-39; Luke 9:23-24, 14:33; John 12:25; Ephesians 5:1-2).

1 Corinthians 13 is often cited as a great description of **Love** in Action. It ends with a phrase that is pertinent to our conversation; one that is probably familiar to many of you:

*“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.
But the greatest of these is love.”*

Faith gives us a foundation for life; Hope gives us a desire for life; and **Love** gives us a way of life.

When we enter this world, we **Love** only ourselves. We are self-centered and selfish. When we move into an Old Testament relationship with God—we take a huge step forward and learn to sacrifice a part of ourselves, by *“treating you as I want to be treated.”*

When we surrender, die to ourselves and are *“born again”* into the Kingdom of God, we take an even greater step forward. Instead of treating others as we want to be treated, we can now begin to give ourselves up completely, die to self and sacrifice for others just as Jesus died and sacrificed Himself for us. **In one giant leap we move from mutual love to sacrificial love!**

We will never achieve the complete **“Oneness”** Jesus prayed for in John 17 until we reunite totally with God and the Saints in Heaven.

But, what a thrill to begin the Journey with Him here on earth,

From Grandpa With Love

#9

Themes

Recently a friend reminded me, “*You like to look for “Themes” in the Bible, don’t you?*” I confessed he was right.

Over the years God has graciously given some tips that help in studying the Bible. One has been “*Themes*”. Jesus often used this unique teaching style that expresses a Truth from multiple sources. For me, it has been a useful tool that gives added confidence that something is important when it is expressed over and over again. Set forth below are some of these conclusions which were earlier discussed in Chapter 11 of *The Road*.

In The Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told His followers

- to be both *salt and light* to change the world around us;
- to have the proper spirit within us so we never engage in such unlawful acts as *murder, adultery, or false witness*;
- to avoid hypocrisy by *giving, praying, and fasting* privately rather than for public acclaim or repayment;
- to retaliate with love by *turning the other cheek, giving our other coat, and carrying the burdens of others the extra mile*;
- to be worry-free and dependent upon God for our physical needs in life as *both the birds and the flowers*;
- to be careful not to place the holy and beautiful things of God before certain antagonistic non-believers who, like *dogs or pigs*, will reject us and trample our offerings in the mud;
- To choose between *two roads, two trees, and two houses*.

Jesus also uses this multiple method of teaching in other passages recorded in the Gospels. For example, He used three parables in Luke 15 to illustrate the value of each person and the joy of seeing each lost sinner return and be reconciled with God.

All were similar stories, yet all were different. All used the same principle, yet with different variations and from different viewpoints.

God used this same multiple method of letting us see Him by using *different writers and illustrations in both the Old and New Testaments*. He also let us see Jesus through the *different experiences and pens of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John*. Again, always the same, yet always different.

This is part of the mystery of Christ and His word (Ephesians 3:1-9; 5:32; Colossians 4:3; Romans 16:25). It fascinates us, intrigues us, frustrates us, and yet attracts us even closer to God. However, it is clear we will never fully understand God's mysteries until we are in heaven. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:12:

“Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”

God will not allow us to put Him in a legalistic box in order that we may, through our intellect and logic, fully know Him. For that reason, we should listen for the *balance and harmony* that God has created through His scriptures and His people rather than assuming that the principle or task that is so important to us individually or to groups with whom we are closely associated represents all truth. *It's as if God were sending His message through a mighty orchestra, and although each brass, string, wind, and percussion instrument is important, one individual instrument does not produce all the music that the orchestra was designed to play.*

It should not surprise us, therefore, that God, Who chose to manifest His oneness in *a mysterious trinity of three different persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, should also choose repeatedly to teach and instruct us through various sets of similar but different examples.

***Help me, Lord, as we seek direction in these difficult times,
to listen to the rest of Your Body,
and not just what you are telling me.***

From Grandpa With Love

#10

From Good to Evil

“Woe to those who call evil good.....”
(Isaiah 5:20) (NIV)

Definitions are increasingly being changed to make something former cultures considered “*evil*”, now be accepted as “*good*”. The list of such changes is rapidly expanding, as we noted in the earlier article entitled “*Whose Dictionary?*”

Years ago I followed the trail of one of these terms (*The Lot*) through the Bible and on into today’s culture, and wrote about it in a “*Letter From Grandpa*”. Because we are increasingly seeing these changes in definitions, it seems time to walk through it again in this abbreviated version. I pray it is helpful as we thread our way through the future.

Approximately 4000 years ago, Abram (later known as the patriarch, Abraham), and his nephew, Lot, both dwelt in the land we now call Israel. The Bible records a growing dispute between them and a simple form of resolution. They used no violence, no lawsuits, no lawyers, no courtrooms and no judges. What could have escalated into broken family relationships, or even open warfare, was resolved by a simple, inexpensive, immediate procedure.

“So Abram said to Lot, ‘Let’s not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Let’s part company. If you go to the left, I’ll go to the right: if you go the right, I’ll go to the left.’”
(Gen 13:8-9) (NIV)

This simple, quick and inexpensive method of deciding issues “*by lot*” was often utilized by the Israelites in the years that followed. For example, usually for seemingly good purposes:

- Determining the territory to be allocated to certain tribes when the Israelites reached “*the promised land*”. (Joshua 18:6)

- Deciding which men should fight (Judges 20:9)
- Deciding which families should minister at certain locations.(1 Chronicles 26:13)
- Deciding who would replace Judas as a member of “*the twelve*” who followed Jesus. (Acts 1:26)

This same simple method has been preserved down through the centuries. Children still decide today who gets a certain portion by drawing straws, and business partners divide companies by one side deciding the value and offering to buy or sell at the price he sets. The result has been the fast, effective, inexpensive resolution of conflicts and disputes for thousands of years.

Unfortunately, mankind has a way of turning a “blessing”, into a “blight”, whenever we allow our baser selfish nature to gain control. It happens when we take God’s gift of a simple way to resolve disputes and convert it into a “*Game*” to try and gain wealth, by engaging in “*Chance*”.

Early Kansans recognized the danger. Article 15 § 3 of the original Kansas Constitution stated:

*“Lotteries and the sale of lottery tickets
are forever prohibited.”*(Emphasis added)

But forever didn’t last. Society changed. The demand for public services and payments increased over the years. The culture also changed. Governments wanted more income and citizens wanted more opportunity to get something for nothing. So State controlled lotteries and other gambling became legal.

**Today, the government itself has become a part of the
“*Gambling*”—now innocently renamed “*Gaming*”—
It formerly banned as a crime!**

From Grandpa With Love

#11

Comparing Two Kingdoms

It has helped me to “see” the unseen Kingdom of God by comparing it to the visible Kingdom of the World.

Set forth below are two ways I have described it. I pray these will help you, as they have me.

Kingdom of the World

Man in control
Visible (Physical)
Finite
Began and Will End
Ruled by Satan (Prince)
Lost through Adam
Man’s Will
Death (Wages we earn)
Free Will of Man
Saved by Works
Earn Reward
Pride
Called “Humanism”
Man Inherently Good
Die forever
Live for self now
Fruit of Sinful Nature
Presented as Utopia Now
Change environment
Tree of Good and Evil

Kingdom of God

God in control
Invisible (Spiritual)
Infinite
Eternal
Ruled by God (King)
Brought by Jesus
God’s Will
Life (A Gift of God)
Sovereignty of God
Saved by Faith
Inheritance is Reward
Humility
Called “Christianity”
Man Fatally Flawed
Live forever
Die to self now
Fruit of Spirit
Perfected on Jesus Return
Repent/be Redeemed
Tree of Life

The Kingdom of the World and the Kingdom of God

*We are Born into the Kingdom of the World;
We are “Born Again” into the Kingdom of God*

*The Kingdom of the World is ruled by Satan through Men;
The Kingdom of God is ruled by God through Godly Men*

*The Kingdom of the World is the Tower of Babel;
The Kingdom of God is the Cross of Christ*

*The Kingdom of the World Grows by Adding;
The Kingdom of God Grows by Dividing to Multiply*

*The Kingdom of the World seeks “To Make a Name for Itself”;
The Kingdom of God seeks to “Glorify God”*

*The Kingdom of the World seeks Unlimited Life and Limited Liability;
The Kingdom of God is “to die once, and after that to face judgment.”*

*The Kingdom of the World Lives for Itself Now, but Dies Forever;
The Kingdom of God Dies to Itself Now, but Lives Forever*

*The Kingdom of the World is “Going My Way”;
The Kingdom of God is “Going His Way”*

*The Kingdom of the World “Seeks to Earn a Reward”;
The Kingdom of God “Gives an Inheritance as a Reward”*

*The Kingdom of the World believes “Man is Inherently Good”;
The Kingdom of God Knows “Man is Fatally Flawed”*

*The Kingdom of the World believes “Man can make the World right”;
The Kingdom of God Knows “Only God can make the World right”*

***The Difference Between
The Kingdom of the World and the Kingdom of God
Is An Eternal Issue.***

Lord, Help Us Always to Seek YOUR Kingdom!

From Grandpa With Love

#12

From The “Good Life” to “Eternal Life”

Both the Old and New Testaments speak of God’s rule. But the Old Testament refers primarily to the earthly manifestation of God’s reign through the nation of Israel, while the New Testament speaks of the eternal, invisible Kingdom of God.

Both speak of *Life*. But the Old Testament refers mainly to the *Good Life* here in this world and little about an *Eternal Life*. (E.g. Deuteronomy 28-30) Some have called it “*The Prosperity Gospel*” since that word appears several times in the Old Testament texts.

By contrast the New Testament promises *Eternal Life* to all who die to themselves in this world and are “*born again*” into the Kingdom of God. But, instead of concentrating on the *Good Life* here on earth, we are warned we should expect hard times, including “*suffering and persecution*” while we live out His Kingdom in this world. (E.g. 1 Peter 2:11; 4:12-19; Matthew 5:10)

A review of the Old Testament shows it features almost exclusively the rich, famous and powerful. The list seems almost endless: Abraham with all his flocks; Moses leading thousands of people to the Promised Land; David amassing and giving huge quantities of gold and silver to build a Temple; Solomon, perhaps the richest, wisest man in History; and innumerable Priests, Prophets and Kings who appear on page after page of the Old Testament.

But, there are few, if any rich, famous or powerful people of significance in the entire New Testament! There were a few on the periphery of Jesus’ ministry, such as Nicodemus, but he comes “*at night*” to ask about being “*born again*” (John 3). He later accompanies Joseph of Arimathea, who is “*a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews*” (John 19) when they took Jesus’ body for burial.

Paul's letter in 1 Corinthians 4 summarizes the actual position of leaders in the early church:

“For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena...we are fools for Christ.”

The role of wealth in the early church is summarized in 1 Timothy 6. Here, Paul makes it clear that riches are a burden and responsibility. It seems to be the right area of ministry for some who are financially gifted, but it is not a role to be held up as a goal for all believers.

When I look at the scriptures and our modern lifestyle, I conclude there is a corollary between the generations of History and each of our life journeys. Just as the “*Good Life*” in this world motivated the Israelites in the Old Testament, so does it often seem to be our chief motivator in our younger time of life. **But as we grow older, particularly if we are fortunate enough to reach these worldly goals, we find they do not satisfy the deep yearning inside us.**

Sooner or later, we become like Solomon in the Book of Ecclesiastes, and we conclude it is not enough. **There has to be something more.** We begin to ask what the song of yester-year asked, “*Is this all there is?*”

At some point, God in His Mercy may allow us to see as Solomon saw when he cried out in Ecclesiastes, “*Meaningless, Meaningless... everything is meaningless*”. Now, we have “*eyes to see*”, and we look up with amazement at an Eternal and Infinite New Kingdom we never saw before. The Kingdom of God and Eternity now become a personal reality. We finally comprehend that this world, and everything in it, will die and pass away—except for Love, The Lord and His Word, and all those who have died to themselves and been “*born again*” into His Kingdom.

We need the things of this physical life God promises in the Old Testament if we follow Him. . But they are not our first priority.

Instead, He promises us that He will provide all our needs when we “seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness”. (Matthew 6:33) (Emphasis added)

The Apostle Paul cautions, “*If a man will not work, he shall not eat.*” (2 Thessalonians 3:10) And, “*If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*” (1 Timothy 5:8) We are not suggesting we ignore this World. But God makes it clear it is a question of trust. Are we seeking first the things of the World or of His Kingdom?

As my time here grows shorter, I find myself wanting to shout from the housetops about God’s great gift and urge us all to complete our journey by embracing this Eternal Gift.

***The real goal is to enter the Kingdom of God (Heaven) now,
and then live a Kingdom style of life in this tough and alien world
until we are called Home!***

From Grandpa With Love

Epilogue

The Tree of Life

2021

*We are not in the Land of Life,
Moving toward Death;*

*We are in the Land of Death,
Moving toward Eternal Life.*

God awoke me one night earlier this year, thinking about *The Tree of Life*. I got up and spent some time in my Bible. I read again Genesis 2-3, the tragic and heartrending story of Adam and Eve disobeying God that resulted in them, and all of us, being cast out of Paradise into the World.

But I was thrilled, as I always am, when I turned to the last two chapters of Revelation and listened to John's description of the New Jerusalem, the River of Life, and the Tree of Life yielding its fruit and healing the nations as his servants serve him! Then this victorious statement for everyone who "*overcomes the world*" (cf. 1 John 5:1-5):

"They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

There will be no more night.

They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun

for the Lord God will give them light.

And they will reign forever and ever."

(Revelation 22:4-5)

As I have thought and meditated on what God was telling me, I realized this is the culmination of many events over the last several months. Life and Death have been much on our minds due to the Covid outbreak around the world. We read of the thousands who were dying, and a sense of sadness enveloped us all.

We disrupted, and in some cases destroyed, our ability to gather together. The term “*social distancing*” is an oxymoron and an impossibility. God stated clearly, “*It is not good for the man to be alone*” (Genesis 2:18). Separation goes against the Bible and human nature. Jesus repeatedly made it clear He wanted others to be “*with Him*” (cf. John 17:24). And one of our children knew it as well when she explained that she knew someone loved her, “*If they want to be with you*”.

In my personal world, I have been saddened during this past year by the death of my dear wife, Jo, and other long-time friends. But we also know that Life goes on as new babies enter the world and new cures are discovered.

I renewed my driver’s license earlier this year and chuckled as I saw it expires on my 100th Birthday. At my age they say I have 2+ years to live. They are wrong. I have all Eternity to live! And I want to encourage you that it is worth the wait!

One young man told me he wanted what I have. I explained that He couldn’t have Old Age without the Years In Between. We are all between the Bookends of Life. There have been and there will be good times and hard times ahead in this world.

***But there will also be a Tree of Eternal Life
for those who persevere.***

I look forward to seeing you here—and in Heaven!

From Grandpa With Love