



Grace Ministry Int.

Living And Sharing The Good News!

On January 15th 1941, in a prisoner-of-war camp in German-controlled Silesia, a crowd of prisoners and Nazi guards gathered in a freezing hall to listen to a performance.

"The Stalag was buried in snow. We were just over 300 prisoners. The four musicians played on broken instruments. Most of the time, the keys on my upright piano remained lowered when pressed. It's on this piano, with my three fellow musicians, dressed in the oddest way, clothing completely tattered, and wooden clogs (thankfully) large enough for the blood to circulate despite the snow underfoot, that I played my quartet. The most diverse classes of society were mingled that night: farmers, factory workers, intellectuals, professional servicemen, doctors and priests."

Thus remembered the French composer Olivier Messiaen.

The 20th century transcendental composer was a medic in the French army during WWII. In 1940, he was taken captive and held in a POW work camp in Poland for 2 years. While there, he met a few other musicians and composed his piece of music, "Quartet for the End of Time". It is a trying, but hauntingly moving arrangement of music. That bitter January night, it was played on (and written for) what instruments they could find: an out of tune upright piano, clarinet, and an old violin and cello. Upon being released from the prison camp, Messiaen went to work straight away writing another piece of music, his 'Turangalila Symphony', an emotional, exuberant work reflecting the...

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discordant times around him, but also pointing towards the hope that he so held for the future and the love that he knew would be necessary to bring it about. A devout Catholic, his faith was admittedly a huge inspiration and strength for him through troubled times.

"I am convinced that joy exists. I am now convinced that the invisible exists more than the visible. Sorrow and horror are only the visible. Joy is beyond sorrow, beauty is beyond horror."



In the face of hate, an honestly Christian man, Messiaen's response to an all-too-modern landscape of legislated inhumanity was not to cry out in anger, or to ask, "Why, O God?!" His response was a jubilant exultation of hope and love for humanity expressed through his music.

His actions inspire me in light of our new year ahead. This last year has been quite troublesome. Certainly, we are in uncertain times. Perhaps some may find them more or less turbulent, or unwelcome than others. But the fact remains that the answer to it all can only be love for our fellow brothers and sisters. I must constantly remind myself to place my ultimate hope in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Throughout history, Christians have been persecuted, yes, but they have also

managed to steadfastly adhere to their faith and thrive during times of adversity as well. In Philippians 4 we are told to be anxious for and over nothing. But with great gratitude, we are to make our requests and troubles known to God through prayer. I Peter 5:9-10 says,

"Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brothers and sisters in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His

eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you."

Despite what troubled times are around you, like Messiaen, know that there is greater strength in the invisible than the visible. Stand united in Christ's hope. Invest in one another through love. Live boldly in excitement for tomorrow. In the closing words of the hymn 'Great is Thy Faithfulness',

"Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside!"

Happy New Year everyone! Yours in love,

-Michael LaMattina

The Power of Hope

By Rev Chuck LaMattina



Among the many blessings that God has given to us one of the most powerful is our God given hope. In one sense everyone has hope. Without hope life in our world would be even more difficult than it is. But our Christian hope is so very different from the general kind of hope that the world has.

When most people speak of hope that hope is a wish or a strong desire such as, "I hope it doesn't rain," or "I sure hope I get that job," or "I hope to see you again." Even though there is an affirmation of hope in each sentence the truth is that the rain may fall, he or she may not get the job and the two people may never meet again.

This is not biblical hope. The Christian's hope is not a strong desire or wishful thinking. It is a sure and certain expectation that what God has promised He will perform. Our hope is living in the confidence of a past event that has produced a present reality that will lead to a future certainty. Here is how Scripture puts it:

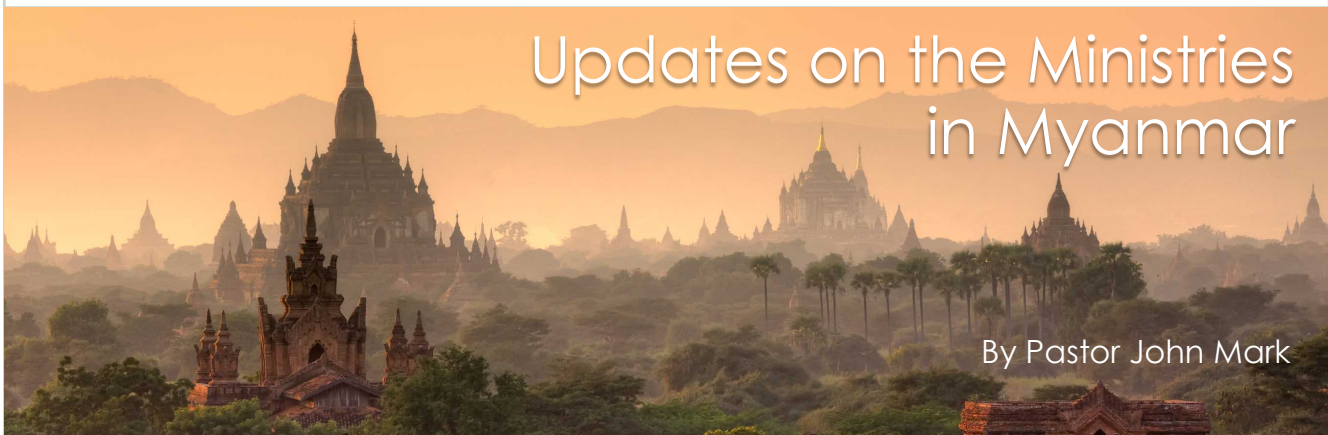
"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope **[present]** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead **[past]**, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in

heaven for you **[future]**, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:3-5)."

Now what exactly is our hope? Our hope is the return of Christ (Titus 2:13). And when he returns he will grant his people everlasting life (Titus 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) Since Jesus Christ was raised up from the dead we have a present living hope that in the future we will receive everlasting life and glory. As believers we know that God "has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace (2 Thessalonians 2:16)."

Once we were without God and without hope (Ephesians 2:12). But now we can live life with joy even in the most difficult of circumstances, because we know that as we trust and believe God we will develop a more godly character. And this spiritual maturity assures us of our hope of one day seeing the glory of God (Romans 5:1-5).

Our hope is a powerful motivating force to help us live with confidence, joy and peace as we believe the great promises of God's Word. As it is written: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13)."



Updates on the Ministries in Myanmar

By Pastor John Mark

I give all glory to the almighty God whom we believe and trust for both our physical and spiritual needs. Even though we are a very small church here, weak and poor, God is mightily working with us and manifesting His wonderful presence among us. Our church is called Tabernacle Missionary Church. Right now we have 13 congregations in villages, and I am entrusted to oversee the affairs of all the ministries. I am pastoring the flock of God. My main ministry goal is to evangelize among the younger generation. Here are some of the ministries we are working on

Women's Ministry

In our church we encourage women's fellowships. They administrate themselves and fully get involved in prayer ministry. They have special women services on every Saturday night and Bible study on Wednesday night. Their main job is to have counseling among women who are in pain, sadness and to manage a good Christian home, how to be a great helper for the husband, and how to train the children.

Men's Ministry

Then there is Men's Ministry. This ministry is very important. The Board of Deacons were created from this Ministry. Bible study is done on every Friday night. Chapter by chapter, the New Testament is studied. They are learning to be mature Christians, good men and great fathers.

Open Lounge Ministry

This is targeted for all the younger generation both male and female, every Tuesday night. This is hosted in the houses of different members each week. One person will lead and there are worship songs, Bible discussions, testimonials, and the discussion of new ideas for the ministry.

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Children's Ministry

We also have Children's ministry for ages 3 to 10. The kids attend church early Sunday mornings and volunteer teachers teach them Bible stories, short chorus songs and help them memorize Bible verses.

Ignite Youth Ministry

This ministry has been birthed from our outreach ministry. All of our Christian youth are very compassionate for the lost souls of their peers in the area. We reach out to young people who are sunk into the vices of alcohol, smoking, sex and drugs and depression. We share the love of God with these neglected people and bring them to our Ignite Youth Services on Sunday evenings.

Orphan's Ministry

My heart was broken when I saw so many orphans suffering challenges like poor health and lack of food, shelter, education, or clothes. We have recently started Adonai Orphanage with 11 orphans. We hope to expand this ministry so that many more orphaned and abandoned children will have places of safety and have the opportunity to be transformed by the word and love of God.

Conclusion

Our God is a God of miracles. He provides for those He calls to be in His mission. More than physical things, our Spiritual affairs are His priority. Everything in our life is dependent on our relationship with Him. My special thanks to Rev. Chuck for his God-given gift for expounding the depth of the Word of God. This gives us understanding and enlightenment in God's love and truth. We are learning to walk with God in the truth more and more in our daily Christian lives.

To God be all the glory!



Testing the Validity of the Doctrine of Trinity



Greetings to you all and God bless you in the name of Jesus Christ. Have you ever wished you had at your disposal a quick study you could share with new friends or acquaintances that would show how the doctrine of the Trinity is not based upon God's Word? I've found the following study to be very compelling in opening doors of conversations on the subject. Hope you may find it useful.

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity holds as its first tenant that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are "co-equal". If that tenant alone cannot be demonstrated by the of evidence from God's

inspired Word, then the entire doctrine must be dismissed as not having scriptural basis, and therefore be considered nothing more than a false doctrine of men.

In order to be co-equal with God, scripture would need to show us that Jesus (and the Holy Spirit) shared in the major attributes that Jews and Christians hold as pertaining to God Almighty. Those are:

- **God is Omniscient (all knowing)**
- **God is Omnipotent (all powerful)**
- **God self-exists (he has always existed and relies on no one for his existence)**
- **God is infinitely good**

Let's take a look at scriptures about Jesus that pertain to each of these attributes.

Does Jesus claim to be Omniscient (all knowing)?

First let's look at a baseline scripture that describes this attribute in God.

"Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, And taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, And showed Him the way of understanding (Isaiah 40:13, 14)?"

It is a tenant of both Judaism and Christianity that these rhetorical questions have an answer of "No one!" It is understood that God is all knowing and has no need of others to counsel Him.

The New Testament is consistent in giving the same message.

"Known to God from eternity are all His works (Acts 15:18)."

So what does Jesus say about himself being all knowing?

"Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me (John 7:16)."

"Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things (John 8:28)."

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father (Mark 13:32)."

So we see by these verses that Jesus does not communicate that he shares with God the attribute of all knowing. Over and over he asserts that all his knowledge of what to say and do comes from God His Father. Does the Apostle John claim that Jesus was all knowing?

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants (Revelation 1:1)."

The answer is no, even in his glorified body at the right hand of God, the Revelation of Jesus Christ had to be provided to him by God.

Does Jesus claim to be Omnipotent (all powerful)?

"Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner (John 5:19)."

"I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me (John 5:30)."

Even after his resurrection Jesus tells us that his power is given to him from God.

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18)."

It is clear that Jesus does not assert himself as sharing with God in being naturally all powerful; power has been given to him. Does the Apostle Paul claim that Jesus is God and all powerful?

"But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3)."

"Now when all things are made subject to Him [Christ], then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him [God] who put all things under Him [Christ], that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28)."

The answer is no, Paul clearly understands that Christ's power is subordinate to God's, and if so, then Jesus cannot, by definition, be co-equal with God.

Does Jesus claim to self-exist?

"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father...(John 6:57)."

Does the Apostle Paul claim that Jesus was self-existent?

"For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God (2 Corinthians 13:4)."

The answer is No, Jesus lives by the power of God. In other words, without the power of God, Jesus does not live or exist.

Does Jesus claim to be infinitely good?

"So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God (Mark 10:18)."

The answer again is clear, whenever reference is made to Jesus being good, he is sure to correct that understanding and state that there is only one that is good, and that is God.

What about the third "person" of the trinity?

There is no scriptural teaching whatsoever that the Holy Spirit is an All-Knowing, All-Powerful, Self-Existent or Infinitely good third person of a trinity. Instead, we're told in Luke 11:13 that our heavenly Father will graciously "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him". The Holy Spirit is the empowering presence of God that enables the believer.

The Conclusion we must arrive at:

Without scriptural evidence of Jesus or the Holy Spirit sharing in these major attributes of God, we must reckon that the first tenant of the doctrine of Trinity is false, and therefore we must dismiss the doctrine in its entirety as merely a tradition of men and not authorized by God or His inspired Word to us.

Adapted by Carl Herke from a study
originally by Don Snedeker 8



Are you feeling inspired to have something included in the next issue of the Grace Ministry Newsletter? Let us know! A poem/song, article, scripture study, or just a reflection on your own thoughts... Anything is welcomed. Grace Ministry International is an eclectically and geographically diverse organization. We have many churches and many more people within those churches! Paul writes of the importance of this in 1st Corinthians:

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.

1st Corinthians 12:12-14

Each and every one of us is endowed with the wonderful gift of the holy spirit, and each and every one of us is a miraculous creation in Christ. And we want to hear from each and every one of you! We look forward to it with anticipation. Grace and peace to you all in the name of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

–Mike LaMattina

We will gladly accept submissions at any time, but if you would like to be included for the Spring 2017 newsletter, please send material to mlamattina23@gmail.com by April 1st. (This is not a joke)