

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." - Matthew 24:14

January 15, 2015

Dear Brethren, Co-Workers and Friends:

We have just gone through another year, as man counts it, and we are now in 2015. For some in 2014 it has been a bad year, especially in the Middle East—some have been butchered, tortured or abused. We have also lost some faithful members whom we shall not see until the resurrection to eternal life.

This world has not become a better place; if anything, it's gotten worse. Even in our free Western societies, a lot of our individual freedoms have been eroded and our efforts to bring the truth to the world are being stifled by the governments of this world. Our radio broadcasts were discontinued due to the nature of our message. Many do not seem to like the fact that we are proclaiming the full counsel of God (Acts 20:27) and that we are unwilling to water down, compromise or speak the truth with a "forked tongue," only in order to become accepted or tolerated by this world. You cannot go on TV or radio and really tell it like it is, and speak out against abortion, homosexuality, same-sex marriages, fornication, war, smoking, the Trinity, the immortal soul, Christmas, Easter and Halloween, the cross, heaven and hell, true parenting, interracial or interfaith marriages, voting in governmental elections, jury duty, unclean meat, the secret rapture or a host of other unbiblical issues, without offending some influential group.

Due to this Satanic politically correct culture we live in, we do not really have real freedom of religious expression—not even in the USA, Canada, the UK or other English-speaking countries, let alone continental European nations and most certainly the oppressive rest of the world.

So just how do we accomplish our task of preaching the gospel to the world as a witness in such an environment? The way of the future to "get the gospel out" is the Internet where the restrictions of radio and TV are not yet a hurdle for us to jump over. In addition, the Internet is universal for the ability of most to access it, whereas radio and TV are restricted to geographical regions and prohibited in others as far as religious programming is concerned, and even where it is permitted, many, if not most, biblical and social topics are "taboo" and must not be addressed.

Our commission has not changed nor has the manner in which we accomplish our task. Apart from our numerous greatly improved and always expanding national and international websites, we will continue with producing and posting our English and German *StandingWatch* programs in the USA, Canada, the UK and Germany; as well as our weekly video sermons in English and German; writing and printing booklets (by now 40 English booklets are available); our weekly Updates (by now, over 670 Updates have been produced); our monthly member letters and our weekly and annual Sabbath services, which are being broadcast live, over the Internet, from California and Colorado, as well as throughout Germany, Austria and Switzerland. This is being done to fulfill our God-given commission to preach the gospel and to provide spiritual food for those who wish to receive it.

Even though we may not be a large group, we are dedicated to the job at hand and what sets us apart is our unwillingness to compromise with or water down God's Word through unclear messages—a trend which is permeating many other groups within the churches of God to the detriment of the membership or sheep under their care. Notice what we read in John 21:15-17:

"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep."

2015 will undoubtedly bring us more challenges, both collectively as a church and individually, because Satan hates God's Church and all of its members. It is therefore incumbent upon us to both stay close to God and to endure at the same time.

Paul described our Christian lives as a race and no matter how difficult it may be at times, we

must complete the race in order to receive the crown of eternal life.

"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

We are both ambassadors for Christ and also God's soldiers. Even though we do not take up arms and fight against human beings, we are still in a spiritual fight with Satan and his demons, the pulls of our flesh and this society which is presently governed by Satan and his wicked spirits in high places. Like good soldiers, we must ensure that our armor is both complete and in good condition. No soldier would go into battle with half of his armor, nor should we face each day with only half of our armor. Each piece is critical for our spiritual survival:

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:11-13).

Key words here are to have the whole armor and to stand. One does not win a battle sitting down or running away, but rather through engaging and confronting the enemy, and we are fighting against evil beings who never get tired and who do not have to take a break to rest or eat.

We are admonished to endure to the end in order to be saved and receive the reward. Some have died in Christ and are currently in their grave, "waiting" for their reward at the return of Christ. The rest of us have to push on to finish the race and the task given to us. God would not give us a task that is impossible to complete; so the fact that we have this task is proof that it can and will be accomplished. Then, the present god of this world and all of his demons who are responsible for all its evils will be replaced by Christ and His saints to rule the world in righteousness for a thousand years.

Our reward in the future will be measured by how well we do now collectively with our commission and individually with our growth in grace and knowledge of God. We are a team and we have a job to do that must be done for the world's sake; otherwise, no flesh—both human and animal life—would survive the terrible times just ahead of us.

By the end of 2015, some of our brethren might have died and joined those who are "awaiting" their reward; the rest will have to push on till the end.

Let's keep being faithful to our calling and completing our task of preaching the gospel to the world as a witness and overcoming our personal weaknesses. Then, all of us will meet Christ in the air at His return and get to work to finally make this planet a better and more joyous place for all mankind.

In Christ's service,

Rene Messier