
DISCERNMENT NEWSLETTER

“...how is it that ye do not discern this time?” Luke 12:56

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Zimbabwe: A Nation Held Hostage

Against the daily drumbeat of the global financial crisis, David and I left for the struggling nation of Zimbabwe. Our time in Zimbabwe certainly put things into perspective. Entering the dusty temporary metal building at the Bulawayo airport, it was encouraging to feel the warmth of the friendly smiles welcoming us to Zimbabwe.

Almost immediately our hosts, Pastors Geoffrey and Eleanor Mkwanzazi took us to a special Women's conference (with some men attending) about 50 miles from Bulawayo. We passed through the dry and parched land as the rains haven't yet arrived.



We learned our first lesson about the economics of the country when the gas was purchased for the car. There are three types of currencies used at the gas stations: the U.S. dollar, South African Rand or the Botswana Pula. One has to purchase gas at the station that has the proper approval for the currency you may have. 20 litres of gas (approximately 5 gallons) costs \$30.00 (U.S.) making gas \$6.00 per gallon. There is a special market that buys the Zimbabwe dollar for the South African Rand (for a profit) so that people can purchase gas for their vehicles. This rate changes almost hourly, so one is not quite sure how many thousands or millions of Zimbabwe dollars is necessary to buy the 5 gallons of gas. The daily challenge is to figure out what the exchange rate is for the day.

The Women's conference on Saturday and then again

on the Sunday was precious as we realized these women had come a great distance and great sacrifice was made for fellowship in the Word of God. They truly encouraged one another to remain faithful in the midst of the suffering in their country.

When we entered Zimbabwe, we had purchased a single entry visa as we were not given the opportunity to obtain the multiple entry visa. Two days after our arrival, one of the pastors offered us a "lift" to Francistown, Botswana where he was travelling to purchase supplies including drums of diesel fuel. We realized we would have to purchase another visa to return to Zimbabwe, but were determined to learn how the people survive in Zimbabwe with no food on the shelves of their grocery stores. Francistown is approximately 150 miles from Bulawayo. One has to go through two very busy border posts both leaving and coming back. We had a late start as the pastor first had to spend considerable time at the local police station to clear some paperwork in regard to his automobile.

Once through the long lines at the borders, we proceeded as quickly as possible to the bank before it closed. It was about 4:00 p.m. when we were finally dropped to do some shopping while our host took off to purchase his long list of supplies including filling the fuel drums. (His son was to be married the next Saturday, so food had to be purchased for the feast.) We purchased a toaster for our host, a bag of flour and yeast to make bread, marmalade and a few other edibles.

Every day there are long lines of Zimbabweans travelling to Botswana to purchase basic supplies which they buy in order to resell a portion of them in Zimbabwe for a bit of a profit.

We left Francistown at approximately 8:00 p.m. and arrived at the border just before the 10:00 p.m. closing - - driving carefully to avoid the bumps and potholes with our heavy load of supplies and diesel fuel. After clearing customs on both sides and then passing through two police check points and bribing a policeman at one of them with a loaf of bread, we

arrived back in Bulawayo at midnight to find our hosts waiting for us with dinner prepared.

A dam located between Botswana and Zimbabwe provides time shared electricity to both countries. Every day the electricity goes off for either a short or very long time. One never knows. The first week it was off for about six hours a day then totally for two days. One never could really count on the schedule when it would be possible to get the cooking accomplished. Many people have a wood fire in a fireplace or outside to cook (in town). The people outside of town do not even have electricity or the luxury of a stove. If one has a gas stove, they would have to travel the distance to Francistown to obtain propane fuel for it.

Nothing is wasted. Plastic bags you may obtain when you shop out of the country are treasured. We were looking about for something to use for our trash in the room. I looked out of the window and saw a plastic bag lying in the yard. I ran out excitedly and then saw there was a big hole in the bottom. No problem, just took some thread and tied the hole shut and we had a great waste basket which we hooked under a table.

Jam jars, coffee tins etc. are used and reused. Plastic water bottles are treasures. The water we drank in the country was boiled so we felt comfortably safe drinking it.

Inflation in Zimbabwe has made daily life almost unbearable. The shelves of the shops everywhere are empty.



Yet, the staff is required to be at work and the shops must remain open or they will lose their license to operate.

The first week we were in Zimbabwe we visited a pharmacy to obtain band-aids. They were sold at \$10,000 (Zimbabwe) per band-aid. The second week the inflation rate had increased so dramatically that the same band-aid cost \$100,000. One U.S. dollar now equaled \$120,000 Zimbabwe dollars.

To put this into perspective for the Zimbabwean who receives his wages in Zimbabwe currency, his wages are required to be paid into his bank account. He is allowed to withdraw \$50,000 per day. The lines of money withdrawers go around the bank with up to 24 hours of waiting. The \$50,000 will buy a loaf of bread or a ride home on a packed bus. The worker must still show up at his place of work in order to maintain his job.

This following photo shows the lines that form daily outside the banks for the \$50,000 (Zimbabwe dollar).



People are starving in Zimbabwe. We heard so many sad stories. In the remote areas there is just no food. The leaves from the trees are being boiled for some sustenance. Mealie-meal (that is ground maize or corn meal) is the staple diet and so many are not able to purchase this needed commodity. There are even some "aid" agencies who are selling their supplies which are supposed to be given to the needy.

Corruption is rife. The political situation is dire. When in Bulawayo the only news we could pick up was the local radio which always gave positive great news about how wonderful it was in Zimbabwe. The gauntlet of the controlling party is concerned about maintaining power at the expense of the citizens of the country. In spite of their hardships, the Zimbabweans are an amazingly peaceful and friendly people.

The church there is alive and strong. The praises to the Lord in the worship were indeed from hearts that glorify their Saviour. Tears streamed down our faces as we heard the faithful voices harmonize in a vibrant glory giving the King of Kings honor and praise. There were quite a few who individually told us that they praise God for President Robert Mugabe because many have turned to the Lord because of the difficulties his regime has brought to their country! Talk about being humbled . . . that we were time and time again. How much we Americans take for granted!

We had been given some funds from the U.S. especially for food for the hungry. This enabled us to purchase many bags of mealie meal for a church in St. Peters (a small village located outside of Bulawayo). The people were in great distress. With great joy we travelled to St. Peters and praised our Lord with the hungry people as they each received their 20 kilogram sack of mealie meal which they lifted onto their heads and departed for their first good meal in weeks.



The pastor from St. Peters has always chosen to work in destitute and difficult areas. He is truly a man of God



Pastor & Mrs. Ncube walk ten miles each way from their home to the church several times a week .

We have established a means through Brother Geoffrey Mkwanzai (who is also the head of the Assemblies of God *Back to God* ministry in Zimbabwe – not affiliated with the Assemblies of God of the U.S.A.) in order to send in more help to the country. This can be designated when you send a mission donation through Discernment Ministries – whether it is in the South African office or the office in the U.S.A.



Eleanor & Geoffrey Mkwanzai are dear friends of mine (Jewel) from many years ago. We worked with them closely in the late 70's when my late husband (Travers van der Merwe) and I lived in Zimbabwe. They are now in their 70's with Geoffrey almost 80 and still faithfully serving the Lord and keeping true to the Word. It was a privilege to stay in their home for two weeks and to have sweet fellowship during our time of learning and ministry in this precious land.

Geoffrey has oversight over many churches comprising 400-500 pastors. For many years they have been renting various premises for the offices of the ministry. They said they have poured literally trillions of dollars into rentals. Yes, Zimbabweans talk in terms of trillions and quad-rillions – amounts I can't even fathom.

They are very anxious to have their own property and have the opportunity to buy premises that would suit their needs. It is available for \$90,000 (U.S.) and in beautiful condition. We agreed to submit the need to our readers.



This potential office building is located a few blocks from the city center in an ideal location for the ministry. From these premises the Bible correspondence school would also be located along with the offices and a meeting place for pastors when they hold their local meetings, etc.

Our visit included a day trip to the town of Gweru where Jewel had lived 30 years ago with her late husband, Travers and two young children. What a delight to see old friends and to further comprehend the difficulties the retirees face with their pensions now valueless. Some miles from Gweru in a small town, Redcliffe, a pastor (who used to be part of the Gweru Assembly many years ago) struggles. He is newly widowed. His church has dwindled from 140 members to about 23. His support is minimal. He told us about how discouraged he was to even try and carry on in the present situation. He could easily immigrate out of the country – but the Lord had just encouraged him to stay and carry on. He is actively doing mission work and traveling to the villages spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His car, a 1990 Mitsubishi van recently had the windshield broken by a child playing with a catapult (sling shot). The glass had shattered and he is not able to get a replacement in the country.

He told us a precious story of seeing an old African woman at the side of the door with her arms raised in praise to God. He stopped to ask her why was she there on her knees praising God. Her reply was, “I am thanking God for Robert Mugabe. Because of him, many people are finding Jesus.”

It took us a few minutes to digest that bit of information. It was amazing. These people were seeing Jesus in the midst of their hardships. They had eternal values in view. We heard this testimony again and again. Those going through the deepest hardships

were giving testimony to the Grace of God at being worthy to suffer during this time.

We certainly had a tremendous sense of being in Zimbabwe to understand the needs that are there by living with these dear folk and reaching out to those who the Lord arranged that we minister to and meet during our time. Our messages were to keep being faithful and trusting in Him and to show love to others in need.

We were blessed by so many who in spite of the circumstances are a living testimony to the grace and mercy of our wonderful Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Willful Ignorance

“Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.”

(Job 21:14)

“Man’s apostasy began in an affectation of forbidden knowledge, but is kept up by an affectation of forbidden ignorance.”

– Matthew Henry

We live in a time of great apostasy when many choose to ignore or disbelieve the simplicity of the Gospel of Salvation, the message of the Cross. Many of the new heresies are intricate, complex, always evolving, and “emerging” with new theologies, philosophies, terminologies, eschatologies, ecclesiology’s, etc. These false teachings puff up people with pride in their human knowledge and lead them to *“ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth”* (2 Timothy 3:7).

Error-filled teachings reflect an artificial light that beckons to those wandering in darkness. The neon beacon of heresy is alluring, creating warm feelings, and bestows a temporal vision that seduces the believer off the narrow path. But it does not convict man of sin in his heart.

The Gospel is the Light of Truth. Matthew Henry in his *Commentary* on John 3:1-21 says it is a “terror to the wicked world” and it makes men’s sins manifest, showing them “the evil of their transgressions.... The Gospel has its *convictions*, to make way for its *consolations*.” Just as this Gospel light shining into the

darkness of men's hearts "*convincing and terrifies* evildoers, so it *confirms and comforts* those that walk in their integrity."

Matthew Henry declares that those "who do not come to the light" of the Gospel of Salvation have an "antipathy to saving knowledge" and a "damning ignorance." Harsh words in our era of touchy-feely assuages to the conscience! But it is a fact of human nature that men choose to willfully disregard the Truth, preferring instead the soft comforts of empty assurances and synthetic lights.

The Word of God in John chapter 3 describes this woeful condition:

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (vs. 18)

"And this is the condemnation, that Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (vs. 19)

"For everyone one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." (vs. 20)

"But he that doeth Truth cometh to the Light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (vs. 21)

These verses come right on the heels of two of the most famous verses in the Christian faith – the well-known Scriptures that testify that

"For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." (John 3:16-17)

But right after these two comforting verses, the apostle John describes those who would "believeth not" in Jesus:

But right after these two comforting verses, the apostle John describes those who did not believe in Jesus:

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (vs 18) [emphasis added]

Matthew Henry applies these verses not only to non-believers, but to those who "persist in unbelief and **willful ignorance**." He referred to it as a "deplorable condition." Applying verse 19 to "those that would not so much as know Him," Henry observed:

"Many inquisitive people had knowledge of Christ and His doctrine and miracles, but they were prejudiced against Him, and **would not** believe in Him, while the generality were sottishly careless and stupid, and **would not** know Him." [bold emphasis added]

The "Gospel is Light," says Henry, and as "Light is self-evidencing, so is the Gospel." This Light of the Gospel is "discovering," "sweet," and "shining in a dark place." But, it is "the unspeakable folly of men that they loved darkness rather than light, rather than *this* Light."

He explains:

- "The Jews loved the dark shadows of their law, and the instructions of their blind guides, rather than the doctrine of Christ.
- "The Gentiles loved their superstitious services of an *unknown God*, whom they ignorantly worshipped, rather than the reasonable service which the Gospel enjoins.
- "Sinners that were wedded to their lusts loved their ignorance and mistakes, which supported them in their sins, rather than the Truths of Christ, which would have parted them from their sins. . ."

These, then, are causes of willful ignorance:

"Wretched man is in love with his sickness, in love with his slavery, and **will not** be made *free*, **will not** be made *whole*" [bold emphasis added]. Matthew Henry further observes:

"The true reason why men love darkness rather than light is because their deeds are evil. They love darkness because they think it is an excuse for their evil deeds, and they hate the light because it robs them of the good opinion they had of themselves, by showing them their sinfulness and misery. Their case is sad, and, because **they are resolved** that they will not *mend* it, **they are resolved** that they will not *see* it.

“**Willful ignorance** is so far from excusing sin that it will be found, at the great day, to aggravate the condemnation. *This is the condemnation*, this is what ruins souls, that they **shut their eyes** against the Light, and will not so much as admit a parley with Christ and His Gospel; they set God so much at defiance that they desire not the knowledge of His ways, Job 21:14. We must account in the judgment, not only for the knowledge we *had*, and *used not*, but for the knowledge we *might have had*, and *would not*; not only for the knowledge we *sinned against*, but for the knowledge we *sinned away*.” [bold emphasis added]

Likewise, Matthew Poole in his earlier 1600s *Commentary* on these same verses, observed:

“This Light is come into the world; that signifies not only His Incarnation, but his revealing the merciful counsel of God for our salvation,... He has opened the way that leads to eternal life. But men loved darkness rather than light; they **preferred, chose, and adhered to their ignorance and errors**, before the Light of Life, the saving knowledge of the Gospel.” [bold emphasis added]

Matthew Henry concludes that

“**Unbelief** may truly be called the *great damning sin*, because it leaves us under the guilt of all our other sins; it is a sin against the *remedy*, against our *appeal*.” [bold emphasis added]

And what is the remedy to willful ignorance, but this, says Henry:

“[Christ] came that *the world through Him might be saved*, that a door of salvation might be opened to the world, and whoever would might enter in by it. God was in Christ *reconciling the world to Himself*, and so saving it. An act of indemnity is passed and published, through Christ a remedial law made, and the world of mankind dealt with, not according to the rigours of the first Covenant, but according to the riches of the second; *that the world through Him might be saved*, for it could never be saved but *through Him*; *there is not salvation in any other*. This is good news to a convinced conscience, healing to broken bones and bleeding wounds, that Christ, our judge, came not to *condemn*, but to *save*.”

Those who come to Jesus Christ will bear the scrutiny of the Light, letting the Gospel of the Cross penetrate between “*joints and marrow*” to the conviction of “*thoughts and intents of the hearts*” (Hebrews 4:12).

The Truth:

“*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*” (Romans 8:1)

“*But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*” (1 Corinthians 11:32)

Quoted material taken from *Matthew Henry's Commentary, Volume 5, Matthew to John* (Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 717-718, and Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Bible, Volume III: Matthew-Revelation* (Hendrickson), p. 293. Capitalization added and text reformatted for blog use.

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RECENT CONFERENCE:

CDs are now available from the Transformation of the Church conference held the week-end of October 10 & 11th, in Niles, Michigan. The conference covered a number of topics that are very current in the transformation of the church movement today.

Pastor Jeff Whittaker: His firsthand account of his personal experience attending the Emergent church leader Brian McLaren's “Everything Must Change” conference.

Pastor Whittaker gives a lively and animated report of his personal experience attending Emergent church leader Brian McLaren's "Everything Must Change" conference in Goshen, Indiana. His entertaining and eye-opening report details the extent to which this movement has adopted the non-biblical practices and doctrines of earth-centered spirituality.

Pastor Larry DeBruyn, a frequent contributor to Herescope over the past several months, delves

into several controversial issues in the modern church.

Pastor DeBruyn examines the question: "Was Paul a Mystic?" He provides a helpful explanation of the key elements of the emerging mysticism that is permeating the evangelical world. His talk is, in part, based on his 4-part Herescope series that ran in May 2008.

Pastor DeBruyn also covers the controversial topic of the new music in the churches in a session entitled "The Romancing of the Soul: Music and Mysticism." This is a must-hear session for those who are experiencing the divisive new music firsthand in their local churches. Pastor DeBruyn's background information is both startling and disturbing.

Dr. Martin Erdmann, a Senior Research Scientist and Bible professor, examines the historical and theological roots of Dominionism: "The Rosicrucian Vision of a Transformed World" delves deeply into Medieval history and the ambition of alchemists and Hermetics to combine science with theology to create a paradise on earth.

"The Puritan View of Post-Millennialism" examines the historical roots of modern American Dominionism, and deals a devastating blow to modern Reconstructionism by conclusively linking key historical Reformed leaders to the Hermeticists and their esoteric doctrines.

"The Transhumanist Vision of a Transformed World" is a shocking report on the current efforts to blend science with spirituality for the purpose of creating a literal technological "New Breed" of man. The eschatological implications are staggering.

Jewel Grewe of Discernment Ministries reports on the New Breed movement in evangelical circles.

"**The New Breed**" is a doctrine that has gained prominence in the past several years in the New

Apostolic Reformation. But it is also an old Latter Rain heresy. Jewel Grewe gives an eye-opening report on just how widespread this horrendous heresy has become, and how it is actually being applied to young people in the church today.

Sarah Leslie of the Discernment Research Group, provides a synopsis of the conference: Describing her firsthand encounters with Dominion theology in political circles during the 1980s during the rise of the Christian Right when she was a right to life leader, Sarah Leslie explains the serious ramifications of holding to a Dominionist worldview, and explains the dialectic process going on between Right and Left Dominionists.

ALSO AVAILABLE: Pastor Larry DeBruyn has graciously permitted us to distribute Dr. Martin Erdmann's excellent "Expository Sermon on Romans 1:1-4," preached at the Franklin Road Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, on Sunday AM, October 12th.

CDs \$5.00 each. Phone 903-567-6423. Credit cards accepted.

South Africa: Phone 011-425-2938 (Helen Gevers or Julie Leo)

Further note from Jewel Grewe

This newsletter is coming from South Africa. I will be here until November 17th. The coming week will be speaking in meetings in Port Elizabeth and Knysna.

To our readers in the U.S.A., please mark your calendars for the first week-end in May. There will be a conference at the Assembly of God in Naugatuck, Connecticut – the site of the Opal Reddin Library. James Bridges, a dear friend of Dr. Reddin) will be our key note speaker with many others doing workshops, etc. The January-February newsletter will have the full details and the information will also be up on our website www.discernment-ministries.org