

GCCN

2015 Spring

GREAT COMMISSION NEWS

Published by Great Commission Center International

848 Stewart Drive, Suite 200, Sunnyvale, CA 94085

Email: info@gcciusa.org Website: <http://www.gcciusa.org>

Tel: (408) 636-0030

Fax: (408) 636-0033



Eschatological Hope and Contemporary Culture

Rev. Dr. Chunming Fong

After World War I and II people started to have a pessimistic world view. They expected that the world would be destroyed by natural catastrophes or human “mismanagement” of the world. Indeed, there are many things in the world which make us worried. Out of all these worries the “imminent” threat of the end of world is a major one. ¹ In fact, according to studies between 2000 and 2008 there has been a 42.8 percent increase in earthquakes worldwide. We are all astonished by the South-East Asia earthquake and tsunami in 2004 killing more than 225,000 people. If that could happen then, it may happen again.

The economic tsunami in 2008 caused \$6.9 trillion to vanish in the United States stock market. That was one half of the total wealth of the United States. Many people lost their jobs,

their homes, and their American dream in the financial recession. The devastating impact of the economic tsunami upon the world is no less than the monumental tsunami in 2004. They share the same characteristics, such as its unpredictable character.

Popapocalypse and Biblical Apocalypse

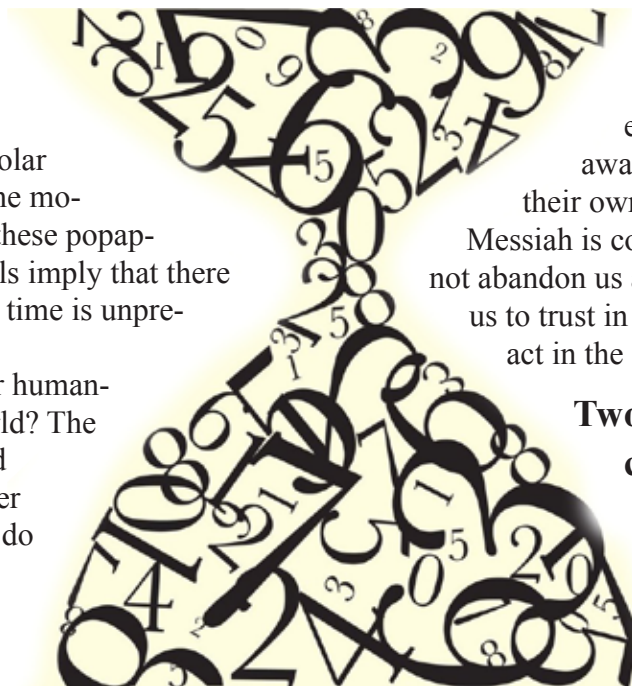
The popapocalyptic movies and novels always narrate an unpredictable catastrophe on top of another. The scale and intensity of each disaster keeps increasing and outdoing the previous one. For example, in the movie 2012, global destruction according to the Mayan calendar occurred in 2012. The waters rose so high that all mountains were almost covered. In the movie Meteor, a giant meteor was approaching the earth. Our only

hope was to fire nuclear missiles to change the path of the meteor. Some novels narrated the threat from the sudden loss of polar glaciers, sudden stop of the motion of the earth, etc. All these popapocalyptic movies and novels imply that there is an end of the world. Its time is unpredictable.

Is there any future for humankind at the end of the world? The popapocalyptic movies and novels portray that in order to survive people have to do selfish, dishonest, abhorrent, and murderous acts. This makes the situation worse. Everything seems to be out of control of humanity. The end of the world seems to be imminent. People feel despair, weary and disappointed. According to popapocalyptic movies and novels the deadly threat is eventually overcome by a hero or a group of people having a great hope, and accomplishing some brave acts. There is no God in mind in the plot of these movies and novels. This secular thinking is different from the Biblical worldview.

The Bible portrays that certain catastrophes are coming to strike the world. The world is coming to an end unavoidably. Although God's presence is not discerned in the human limited perspective, God is always present. He prepares to save His creation and humans. He will not retreat in the face of catastrophe. No matter how high the waters rise, God is still seated as king forever. His majestic power and merciful love toward humans is our only hope to overcome the sufferings and difficulties in the end times. This hope is founded in Jesus Christ, who died, is risen, and prays for us before God. Many faithful heroes before us shared this eschatological hope, and they overcame their own catastrophic events through the cross and trust in Christ the Messiah.

Here the Bible mentions that Christ acts as our close friend. Although the circumstances of



human living in the end times have turned dim and abrupt, and our earthly friends are running away from us due to fear and their own limitations, Christ the Messiah is coming back for us. He does not abandon us and leave us alone. He asks us to trust in him and hope for His saving act in the end age.

Two Expectations of Eschatological Hope

What is this eschatological hope? This hope is a constant decision to move into the end age.

It includes two expectations: one is God's saving act before the end of the world; the other is at the end of the world. On the one hand, we expect that prior to the end of the world God will provide us with strength to overcome the present difficulties and threatening situations. He may expand our limited horizons to see new possibilities.² We may try to open all possible doors we can imagine in order to move towards the end age. The more we trust and hope that God will help us, the more we feel joy and are uplifted from despair. We may never accept that we are defeated by Satan. Our future hope is often explicitly expressed by the prophets in the Bible who tried to encourage Israelites in the period of exile and persecution that God will open new possibilities in the future.

On the other hand, we expect that at the end of the world God's mighty hand will come down from heaven to transform us from present difficulties and sufferings to the future. God's saving action is unimaginable. In Christ's second coming Christians shall be taken up to the clouds to see Christ in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Theologians suggest that this eschatological event is accompanied with two possibilities of the eschatological future: one with other-worldly character; the other with this-worldly character.

Two Possibilities of Eschatological Hope

These two possibilities are not necessary mutually exclusive. One does not necessarily replace the other. Concerning the other-worldly form of the eschatological future, the Bible mentions that this earthly world is not our eternal home. It shall vanish in the end times. Before its end God will save us from all disasters in the world by transforming us into the final and eternal state of heavenly perfection. This heaven is our eternal home. This is why the Bible encourages us to see ourselves as the aliens and strangers in the world. We are waiting for Christ's return and accomplishment of the future blessings of heaven. There we expect no more suffering and death. God will restore and return our loved ones too. The martyrs, who died for Christ, will come back to life. They will not die anymore. With this future life they are impregnable (Revelation 20:6, 9). Because of this eschatological or unimaginable other-worldly future we should practice the "new" ethical living by following how Christ lived in the earth. This is why our living is different from those who do not have such a future hope.

Concerning the this-worldly form of the eschatological future, the Bible portrays that Christians believe and hope that before God transforms us to heaven, the world will be "radically transformed" in a temporal and temporary period of earthly perfection. This ideal period is called millennium. According to Revelation 20 it is around a thousand years. It precedes the final and eternal state of heavenly perfection. In this period God will establish His kingdom in this world. The evil and its powers are completely eliminated, and the condition of life is perfected. There is no more political, social, economic injustice and oppression. There will be no more natural catastrophes, despairing events, suffering and death. Christ's victory is so manifested that the past appearance of being defeated by Satan or the "beast" is overturned. Those who are martyred for Christ are now vindicated, triumph and reign with Christ. (Revelation 19:11-21).³

With the above two possibilities of eschatological hope in mind Christians are to encourage

each other and commit to caring each other to face their uncertainty. Also, the Bible teaches that we have to be "watchful" for Christ's second coming, which is a key factor related to this hope. The NT teaches that Christ could return to manifest this hope at any time today. We should prepare for his coming. How should we prepare?

The Greek word for "watchful" is *gregoreo*, which literally means "keep awake." It does not mean that we should "watch" the sky (Acts 1:11), or try to discover any signs for His coming. Jesus has made clear that the time is unpredictable. He will come unexpectedly as a thief in the night. Hence, we should avoid the mistake of California preacher Harold Camping, the founder of Family Radio, who tried to predict an impending Judgment Day and the second coming of Christ in 1994, and again on May 21 and October 21, 2011. His predictions failed, though he convinced thousands of his followers to donate money to his radio program, and quit their jobs.

The word "watchful" should be understood as calling those who have eschatological hope not to be lazy, but to realize that we are the aliens and strangers in the world. Thus we should serve Christ diligently and obediently.⁴ We should also lead people to develop a personal relationship with Christ, who is our only hope in unpredictable catastrophe and the end times. Indeed, our eschatological hope can shape our actions today.

1 David Jeremiah, Living with Confidence in a Chaotic World: What on Earth Should We Do Now? (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009), xv.

2 Richard Bauckham and Trevor Hart, Hope against Hope: Christian Eschatology at the Turn of the Millennium (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 54.

3 Bauckham and Hart, Hope against Hope, 134-135.

4 Keith A. Mathison, Postmillennialism: An Eschatology of Hope (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1999), 204-205.

Rev. Chunming Fong is the Senior Pastor of West Valley Christian Alliance Church in Northern California.



Four Views on the End Times

Alex. I. H. Chi, Ph.D.

Introduction

The most precious hope of Christians is the return of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thes. 4:16-18). The Bible teaches that one day He will replace our evil and fallen world with a new world. Moreover, He will rule righteously over the earth during a thousand years period called the millennium. In those days, people will obey God, there will be world peace, and animals will dwell together in harmony.

There are four popular views of the end times -- some literal, and others figurative -- which are derived from different fundamental assumptions. The aim of this article is to briefly compare these four views.

Dispensational Premillennialism (Futurist)

Premillennialism is so named because it places the second coming of Jesus Christ before the millennium. In general, Premillennialists believe that most of end times prophecy is yet to be fulfilled, and that the second coming of Jesus Christ is followed by His thousand-year reign on earth. Premillennialism can be further divided into subcategories based on differing views on the timing of the rapture of the Church. In particular, the popular subcategory Dispensational

Premillennialism, which is founded in the doctrines of Dispensationalism, is distinct in its view of pre-tribulation (as opposed to mid-tribulation, pre-wrath or post-tribulation) rapture. Dispensational Premillennialism arises from a strict literal interpretation of end times prophecy

Historical Premillennialism (Historicist)

Historical Premillennialism places the second coming of Christ just before the millennium, and just after a time of great apostasy and tribulation. This view is called "historical" because parts of it were first introduced by the early church father Justin Martyr. It holds that much of end times prophecy has been fulfilled over the past two millennia since Christ's death and resurrection. Moreover, it typically does not hold to a final seven years tribulation period, a specific person as the antichrist, or the special role of national Israel as distinct from the church. It teaches two separate resurrections; the righteous are raised before the millennium, and the wicked afterwards. However, though it shares some similarities with Dispensational Premillennialism, Historical Premillennialism is not as strictly literal in its interpretation of the OT prophecy and the book of Revelation.

Postmillennialism (Preterist)

Postmillennialism places the return of Christ after the millennium. Those who espouse this view believe that we are currently awaiting the final return of Christ, which occurs at the end of a non-literal thousand years that began with the destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jews, and the ascendancy of the Church Age. Some extreme postmillennialists even believe that Christ's second coming occurred after the fall of Jerusalem, and that the Church is in the final Kingdom period, working towards complete dominion over the world. Though Postmillennialism is considered to result from a literal interpretation of Scripture, its interpretation of OT prophecy and the book of Revelation is not strictly literal.

There are several different branches of postmillennialism. The popular Postmillennial Theonomist viewpoint holds that the majority of Old Testament judgment prophecies and prophecies in Revelations were fulfilled in 70 A.D. at the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.

Amillennialism (Idealist)

Amillennialism was popularized by Augustine, and remains the dominant view among Catholics and some Protestant denominations, including Lutheran, Reformed and Anglican. Amillennialism is also termed Inaugurated Millennialism; Amillennialists believe that the Kingdom of God was inaugurated at Christ's resurrection, and that Christ is even now reigning over His church after His victory over death and the curse. Perhaps, Amillennialism is better termed Nunc-Millennialism (nunc means "now"), which states that there is not a literal millennial reign of Christ on earth, but rather that Christians are currently reigning spiritually with Christ in a figu-

rative sense as we strive to bring about justice and righteousness in the world. The view takes a purely figurative approach, not even considering literal interpretation. Thus, the idealist is free to find an appropriate application of the figurative concepts and symbols to current circumstances. Idealists see prophetic scripture as a general portrayal of the fight between good and evil with graphic warnings that encourage the Christian to live righteously. Amillennialism also teaches just one resurrection of the righteous and wicked at the second coming of Christ.

For your reference there is a chart on the following page comparing these four views.

It is important to note that the diversity of views on the end times is the result of different approaches to the interpretation of OT prophecy and Revelation 20. It is acceptable that the passages might have different interpretations, just as there are different understandings of the rest of the Holy Scriptures. However, the fundamental promises of God to defeat Satan, to protect and provide for His saints before the defeat of Satan, and to victoriously govern His people, do not change. These promises greatly comfort modern day Christians, especially during their times of trouble.

For suggested further reading resources please go to

https://www.gcciusa.org/English/publications/GCN/2015/2015_GCN_Spring.pdf

Alex I.H. Chi (Ph.D, Th.M) is the founder of Beijing International Mandarin Church and he is currently serving as adjunct lecturer of several seminaries in North America, Southeast Asia and Australia.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES	DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM (FUTURIST)	PREMILLENNIALISM (HISTORICAL)	POST-MILLENNIALISM (PRETERIST)	AMILLENNIALISM (IDEALIST)
The kingdom	Jesus did not establish it at His first coming, but will establish it during His second coming.	The kingdom was presented through the Spirit since Pentecost, and it will be experienced by sight during the millennium after Christ's return.	The kingdom is a spiritual entity experienced on earth through the Christianizing affect of the Gospel.	The kingdom is a spiritual reality that all children of God partake in. And it is seen presently by faith, but will be grasped by sight at the consummation.
The NT church	The NT church and OT Israel are two distinct identities with two individual plans of redemption.	The NT church is the fulfillment of OT Israel. This means the physical Israel has no distinct plan of redemption, but the prophecies of Israel in the OT are fulfilled in the NT church.	Its view is similar to historical Premillennialism.	The NT church is the visible manifestation today of the kingdom foretold by OT prophecy, John the Baptist and Jesus. It is the eschatological (i.e. the end times) fulfillment of Israel.
The tribulation	The tribulation is a seven-year period (the 70th week of Daniel 9: 25-27) that contains the reign of the Anti-Christ just prior to the millennium, the restoration of Jews to Israel, the conversion of the remnant of Israel, the rebuilding of the temple, and the restoration of the priesthood and sacrifices	The tribulation is the specific time of apostasy and suffering just before the millennium. It is ended by the battle of Armageddon and the destruction of the Anti-Christ. Many Jews will then be converted at this time.		
The rapture	The church (including both the living and dead) is raptured to meet the Lord in the air either at the beginning (pre-trib), middle (mid-trib) or end (post-trib) of the seven years of tribulation. The tribulation saints and Old Testament dead will be raised at the end of the tribulation	Living and dead saints are to meet the Lord in the clouds immediately preceding the millennium		
The millennium	Christ will return at the end of the tribulation to institute a millennium rule from a holy city (the New Jerusalem). Those who come to believe in Christ during the tribulation (including the 144,000 Jews) and survive will go on to populate the earth during this time. Those who were raptured or raised previous to the tribulation period will reign with Christ over the millennial population	Christ will return to institute a millennium reign on earth. There will be the re-establishment of temple worship and sacrifice as a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice	The millennium is an era (not a literal 1000 years) during which Christ will reign over the earth. However, He will reign, not from an literal and earthly throne, but through the gradual increase of the Gospel and its power to change lives. After this gradual Christianization of the world, Christ will return and immediately usher the church into their eternal state after judging the wicked	The millennium is not a literal 1000 years, but a long period of time between the first coming and second coming of Christ, inaugurated with Christ's resurrection in an "already/not yet" sense. Christ already reigns over all and is already victorious over Satan
Post-millennium	Having been bound during Christ's earthly reign, Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations. He will also gather an army of the deceived, and take up to battle against the Lord. The battle will end in the judgment of the wicked and Satan, followed by the righteous' entrance into the eternal state of glory.	Satan will be loosed. Gog and Magog will rise against the kingdom of God. Satan will be defeated. Then the righteous and the wicked among the dead are raised and face the great white throne judgment, followed by the eternal state.	Christ returns. The righteous and the wicked are raised, and face the final judgment and the eternal state	Satan will be loosed. Gog and Magog will rise against the kingdom of God. Christ returns and Satan will be defeated. Then the righteous and wicked among the dead are raised and have the great white throne judgment, followed by the eternal state

WATCH OUT! BE ALERT! (MARK 13)

Like most of us who grew up in North America, we live in a very peaceful environment. War is a foreign concept to us. But lately, war is getting closer to home. The Islamic terrorist group ISIS is threatening to attack one of our shopping malls. What does it tell us about the end time? How should we prepare for the return of Jesus Christ?

Mark chapter 13 records the longest teaching of Jesus in this Gospel. Jesus taught us how to prepare for the end time. His teaching was triggered by the comment of the disciples who were captivated by the magnificent human achievement—the temple. It was on Tuesday late afternoon, as they left the temple and Jerusalem, and headed west toward Bethany. The golden rays reflected from the white wall of the temple, what a pretty scene! Jesus took this opportunity to teach them, as well as the church, how to prepare for His second coming.

As we further study this chapter, we will find that there were 2 repeating commands. The first one was “watch out (βλέπω)” (5) or “be on your guard” (9, 23 and 33). The other was “be alert (γρηγορέω)” or “be awake” (34, 35 and 37). What do we watch out for? And how should we be alert?

Watch out so that we will not be deceived

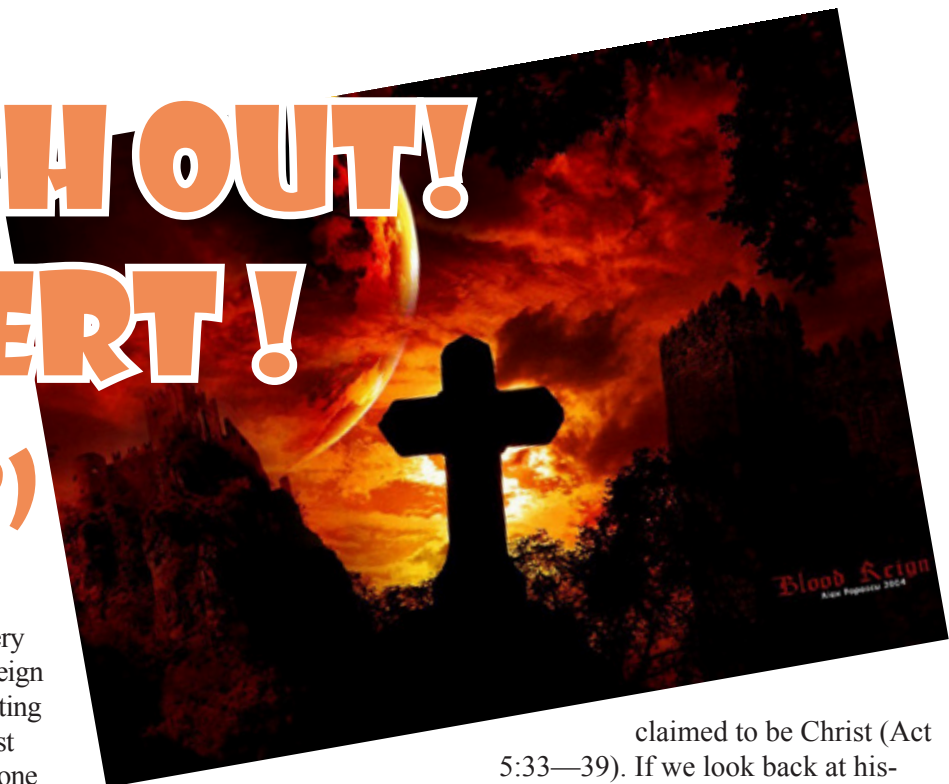
The first command that Jesus gave was to “watch out.” When we tell people to watch out, we are telling them to discern what is true and what is false. Jesus used the same connotation in telling us to watch out. Specifically, Jesus told us to watch out for two types of events: false Christ, and rumors of wars. Why should we watch out? We will not be deceived, and we will not be troubled by them.

During Jesus’ time, there were people who

claimed to be Christ (Acts 5:33—39). If we look back at history, there have been a lot more imposters and some of them are still alive today. The first one, who is still alive, is a Chinese woman, Yan Xiangbin, who claims to be Christ. She and her cohorts form a cult called the “Eastern Lightning.” Later on they changed its name to the “Church of Almighty God” and then again to “Church of the Gospel Kingdom.” This cult uses many Christian terms to deceive. Before Yan Xiangbin, there was Sun Myung Moon, David Koresh, and many more false claims. They all have occurred in the last twenty to thirty years.

Someone asked me how I can tell those who claim to be Christ are imposters. According to the Bible, before Christ returns, the church rapture will take place and will be followed by the seven years of tribulation. At the end of the tribulation, Christ will gloriously descend from heaven. All these “Christs” are either dead or running away from governments. What glory do they have? We need to watch out, to compare each claim against the biblical principle.

Prior to 20th Century, all wars were limited in a geographic location. But in the 20th Century, two World Wars happened. Subsequently, there was the Korean War, Vietnam War, Six Days War, Yom Kippur War, Cold War, just war, Civil Wars and lately, the war against Islamic terrorism. If there is a leader who can unite the Muslims and the Arab world to pacify the Islamic terrorism and Iran, resolve the problem between Russia and Ukraine, and exert power over North Korea, the rest of the world will follow him. Who will he be? He will be the “beast” as prophesized in the Book of Revelation. When this leader arises, the world will enjoy peace for a short time, and he will herald in the first judgment of the



seal judgment in the Revelation—the White Horse Judgment (Rev. 6:2).

Watch out because there will be persecution (9—22)

The second “watch out” is issued in verse 9. Jesus was talking about Christian persecution. When we look at history, Christians were persecuted initially until Constantine became the Roman Emperor. Recently, Christian persecution has begun again. In Nigeria, a Christian village was wiped out, killing at least 2,000 Christians. The terrorist group declared that more was to come. 21 Egyptian Christians were beheaded a few weeks ago. Yesterday more than 40 Christians in Syria were kidnapped. Jesus commanded us to watch out so that we know persecution will come. Persecution is a special way for us to reach out to those we could not reach out to otherwise. Therefore when persecution comes, we will know that the Holy Spirit will be with us. All we need to do is prepare ourselves so that we may be able to share the gospel.

In addition to Christian persecution, the Jews will be persecuted too. Jesus said, “...when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION standing where it should not be...” the Jews should flee right away. Evidence pointed that when the temple was destroyed in AD 70, the Jews fled. Jesus did not come. Therefore this prophecy will be fulfilled in the future and Jesus will return soon after. I believe that the temple will be rebuilt at the beginning of the seven years of tribulation. In three and a half years into the tribulation, the anti-Christ will stand in the temple and demand worship from all people (c.f. Rev. 13:4). At that time, the Jews will need to flee again (c.f. Zech. 14:5) How long does it take to build a temple? For any building project, planning takes the longest time. I heard from one of my teachers that the design, the blue print, and the construction model of the temple have already been put together. Once the matching order is issued, the construction can be completed in a matter of one or two years.

Watch out to know that there is not much time left (23—31)

The third “watch out” is issued in verse 23. There were two commands that support this “watch out”: to learn from the growth cycle of a fig tree and know that Jesus’ return will be very soon. A fig tree buds in late spring. When it buds, summer will be here. By the same token, as we see the number of false Christs growing, wars and the rumors of wars growing, and persecution coming, these are signs of Christ’s second

coming. These past ten years, we have seen immorality, cruelty and the number of wars increasing rapidly. When the temple begins to be rebuilt (after rapture takes place), it signifies the beginning of the seven years of tribulation. By the end of this period, Jesus will return to the world. These event will not need one generation’s time to be fulfilled. This command reminds us that there is not much time left.

Watch out and be alert because you do not want to be found asleep (32—37)

The fourth “watch out” is issued in conjunction with “be alert” in verse 33. What does it mean by “be alert?” It means to be awake, or to be watchful. It is like a man going on a journey. Before he left, he assigned tasks for every slave. He expected that they would be awake when he returned, but he did not tell them when he would return. He could come back in the evening, midnight, or early in the morning. In other words, the man expected his slaves to perform their tasks diligently while he was away. Be alert means that one must do his task diligently.

By the same token, before Jesus left the world, Jesus gave us the great commission, which is “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...” Jesus did not tell us to wait at a certain place for His return. Rather Jesus commanded us to make disciples of all the nations, and to teach them all that Jesus had taught us. When Jesus returns He expects to see us to be involved in evangelism and disciple making. Are you ready for His return?

Conclusion

I usually do not pay attention to the weather forecast. This weekend my family and I are planning to have an outing. So I went on the internet and looked for the weather forecast of our destination to find out what the weather would be like: will it be cold, windy, and rainy? With this information, I will know how I should pack for the outing. In other words, these forecast information is for us to act accordingly. Jesus told us all that will happen before He returns. Let us begin to watch out for the false Christ, and not be troubled by wars and be ready for persecution. Let us involve ourselves in evangelism and disciple making at all times. When He returns, He will find us faithful!

Pastor Onesimus is a senior pastor in San Francisco Bay Area, California.



China: In the cities of China yuppies are turning to Christianity. Buddhism attracts the middle class while Taoism has rebounded in small towns and the countryside. Islam is also on the rise, not only in troubled minority areas, but also among tens of millions of people elsewhere in China.

<Pray For China, <http://www.prayforchina.com>, 2/14/15>

Europe: In responding to the recent wave of violence against Jews in Europe Israel Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu called on Jews from Europe to walk away from growing anti-Semitism and terrorism and move to Israel. He said, *"I would like to tell all European Jews and all Jews wherever they are: 'Israel is the home of every Jew. To the Jews of Europe and to the Jews of the world I say that Israel is waiting for you with open arms.'*" However, European leaders rejected calls from Israel's leader for a mass migration of the continent's Jews to Israel, urging unity instead, despite desecrated Jewish graves in France and a deadly attack at a synagogue in Denmark.

<Tom Hall, <http://townhall.com>, 2/16/15>

Europe & Middle East: Forty nations of about 3.5 million people marched in France in protest after three days of terrorist killings resulting in 16 dead and 22 wounded. Satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo's decision to publish cartoons of Islam's prophet prompted criticism that was unnecessary provocative and has now been condemned by Middle East and North African governments.

<Mission Network News, <https://www.mnnonline.org>, 1/21/15>

Guinea: World Health Organization estimates 2,000 people have died from Ebola in Guinea since the outbreak began last year when a 2-year-old boy died in December 2013. The viscous disease quickly spread and claimed about 9,000 lives in 6 different countries, including Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Mali, and the U.S. The disease is at its highest near the end of December but drops significantly in January 18 reporting its lowest cases. Because of the decline, mission agents received green light to return to Africa and will resume sharing of the hope of Christ and demonstrating His love in Word and deed. Scientists so far have found no lasting cure for Ebola, but a Japanese trail drug had positive results and may be distributed in certain locations.

<Mission Network News, <https://www.mnnonline.org/>, 2/14/15>

Middle East: Christians chased from their homes are now refugees in neighboring countries. Fear and violence drove them to such places as Lebanon, Jordan, northern Iraq and Turkey. After nearly months of running from ISIS, their lives are forever changed. Across the Middle East, you can find rows of tents, covered with plastic and burlap bags sheltering millions of Iraqi and Syrian refugees.

<Sat-7, www.sat7usa.org, 1/30/15>

South Sudan: Hundreds more child soldiers were recently released by a rebel group, said UNICEF, as part of a broader plan to free up to 3,000 children from its ranks in the coming month. An initial group of 280 children was released in late January. UNICEF estimates as many as 12,000 South Sudanese children have been recruited into armed groups since war broke out in December 2013.

<World Vision, www.worldvision.org,>

USA: A comprehensive survey of U.S. Census data finds that the nuclear American family, where both biological parents are at home, is in meltdown, with blacks teens being hit especially hard with less than 2-in-10 15-17-year-olds living with mom and dad. The survey also shows a depressing historical roadmap of the breakup of traditional families, a trend the group fears will continue unless marriage "until death do us part" is revived. 46 percent of teens 15-17 have grown up with the biological parents, an all-time low from a high of 63 percent in 1950. Just 17 percent of black teens live with their nuclear family, another all-time low and down from 38 percent in 1950. 54 percent of white kids aged 15-17 grew up with their biological family intact, a low point and down from 67 percent in 1950.

<Marriage and Religion Research, <http://marri.us>, 2/12/15>

Ukraine: It took about 17 hours, but a ceasefire agreement has been reached in Ukraine. The German/French-brokered deal is just the beginning of what all parties say is a long diplomatic road ahead. President Vladimir Putin was the first to announce the deal, but he also said there are still many issues facing the region. Ukraine ceasefire will allow aid and the Gospel to flow.

<Mission Network News, <https://www.mnnonline.org>, 2/13/15>

United Kingdom: The Muslim population has increased from 1.55 million in 2001 to 2.71 million in 2011 – making it larger than all other non-Christian groups put together. The Muslim Council of Britain has found that the number of children who identify as Muslims in the UK has almost doubled in a decade. A third of all Muslims in the UK are under 15, while just four per cent are over 65. However, though the numbers have risen, fewer than one in 20 of the UK's overall population follow Islam. There is a higher rate of unemployment among the Muslim population in comparison to the overall population, while 26 per cent have no qualifications. Additionally, Muslim students are less likely to attend top universities. Almost half of the Muslim population (46 per cent) lives in the 10 per cent most deprived parts of England. Perhaps most significantly, while fewer than 50 per cent of Muslims were born in Britain, 73 per cent say that their only national identity is British.

<Christianity Today, www.christiantoday.com, 2/12/15>

“Come over... and help us!”

(Acts 16:9b)

In the past 2 years, God has shown GCCI the desperate need of the Roma people (Gypsies) in Eastern Europe, and He also helped us to make friends with a number of Roma Christian leaders in several countries. It is amazing to see how God opens the hearts of the Roma people to accept the Chinese with open arms. In view of this phenomenon, some veteran western missionaries suggest that the Chinese Church can serve as a bridge in Roma missions. Therefore, GCCI is organizing a Conference on “Reaching the Roma People in Eastern Europe” in September of this year. The details are as follow:

“Reaching the Roma People in Eastern Europe” Mission Conference

Date: September 29 (Tuesday) – October 2 (Friday) , 2015
Venue: Hungary Chinese Christian Church
Theme: From Roma to the Nations
Languages: Mandarin and English
Objectives: (1) Encourage churches to care for unreached People groups
(2) Understand the Roma People in Eastern Europe and their needs
(3) Explore mission strategies and cooperation plans to reach the Roma for Christ
Fees: Registration Fee: US\$25
Room and Board: Euro €130

Program Highlights:

1. 3 Bible Expositions
2. 3 Major Addresses: History and Culture of the Roma People, Their Distribution and Religious Worldview
3. 9 Ministry Workshops
4. Country Reports and Strategy Discussion
5. Missionary Testimonies
6. Evening Meetings

**Registration Deadline:
August 15, 2015**

*Post-Conference Short-term Teams to: Hungary, Serbia and Romania.
Please download registration form and program sheet from www.gcciusa.org
or call 1-408-636-0030 for more details.*



2015 Short-Term Service Mission to the Roma People in Hungary

Date: July 15-28, 2015

Purpose:

1. Learn Roma culture and Holistic Mission through pre-trip preparation, on-the-trip training and post-trip debriefing.
2. Through participating in cross-cultural services to broaden the passion and vision of all team members in global missions.

Activities:

1. Visit Roma Communities and experience their living
2. Conduct Bible Camps for children and youth
3. Cooperate with Hungarian churches to hold Family Camp for Roma families

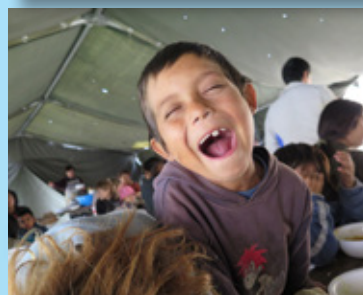
Schedule:

July 15	Arrive in Budapest
July 16, 17	On Field Orientation
July 18-21	Participate in Children Bible Camp in Nyirtelek
July 22-26	Participate in the Family Camp in Balaton
July 27	Debriefing

Expenses: US\$900 plus round trip ticket to and from Budapest

Team Leader: Rev. Sek Wai Lo

Application Deadline:
June 15, 2015 or when quota is full.



Enquiry and Application: USA: (1) 408-636-0030

Canada: (1) 778-233-2109

Hong Kong: (852) 2540-0131

Conference on the Second Coming of Christ

In view of the situation of the world today, more and more people are asking the question: "Are we in the end-age? Is Jesus returning soon? What are the signs of His coming?"

To clarify these timely and desperate questions, and to comfort the heart of God's people, a number of Chinese churches and mission groups in the San Francisco Bay Area will hold a special seminar (in 3 languages on 3 different dates) under the title of "Jesus Is Coming Soon, Are You Ready?" The details are as following:

April 11 Cantonese

9:15am-5:15pm

**Cornerstone Baptist Church
801 Silver Ave.,
San Francisco, CA 94134**

April 18 Mandarin

9:15am-5:15pm

**Korean Emmanuel Presbyterian
Church
4435 Fortran Drive,
San Jose, CA 95134**

April 18 English/ Korean

19:00pm-21:30pm

**Korean Emmanuel Presbyterian
Church
4435 Fortran Drive,
San Jose, CA 95134**

You are cordially invited to come to this important gathering.

Please call 408-636-0030 (English, Cantonese, Mandarin) and 408-263-5100 (Korean) for more information.