

July 18, 2016

Dear Members and Friends,

We said in the beginning of the year that 2016 is going to be interesting; that things will not get better; and that we should be prepared for significant events to take place, in light of biblical prophecy. We are now in the middle of the year and what we have said has been confirmed: more ISIS terrorist attacks; more political drama; Great Britain leaving the EU; more racial tension and violent controversy; and there is more to come.

With more than 7 billion people in the world, we have seen that some of the "minorities" are letting their voices be heard, but not in a good way. For example, the LGBT community has gained a lot more momentum lately—even more so now since last month's terrorist attack at a gay night club in Orlando, Florida, where gays were specifically targeted. The world sympathized with them and brought increasing attention to the gay community. This is not to say that the murder of innocent civilians was justified, as that terrible action was clearly wrong.

Same sex marriage is becoming more and more acceptable, even within the Catholic church, and is increasing in popularity all around the world, BUT less than 4% of Americans are actually gay, according to Bloomberg.com, dated May 2015. The excuse to approve of same sex marriage and homosexuality is based on the mindset that "times have changed" and "God loves you no matter what." However, God sees otherwise (compare Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9).

Racial tension has certainly increased, especially between some white police officers and some black civilians, and the focus is being shone on blacks as "targets." According to an article by Bloomberg, dated July 14, 2016, "The phrase 'Black Lives Matter' originated in 2013 with the community organizers Opal Tometi, Alicia Garza, and Patrisse Cullors as a Twitter hashtag to protest the killing of Trayvon Martin by a community watch volunteer in Florida. When another black teenager, Michael Brown, was fatally shot by a police officer in Missouri the following year, the three women turned the words into an activist network, organizing protests across the country. The phrase has come to refer to a national movement of many groups and individuals with a broad range of social-justice concerns, all focused on law enforcement's use of deadly force against black Americans... The politics surrounding Black Lives Matter are explosive. Opponents range from those who say it paints police in general as racist, adding to the danger they face on the job, to those who seek to portray it as suggesting only black lives matter."

The public demand answers and there are some that want to take it further by resorting to violence in revenge, thinking that that will "vindicate" the problem, but God sees otherwise (compare Leviticus 19:17-18; Matthew 5:21-22; Proverbs 3:31).

Many feel that the concept of racism within the US police force is totally overblown. Even though they don't deny that there are police officers who are racists, they insist that this is not true to the degree as portrayed in the left-liberal media and by "progressive" politicians. In several Fox News interviews on July 13, 2016, with Heather Mac Donald, a "Manhattan Institute Senior Fellow" and author of the book, "The War on Cops," it was claimed that white police officers have been shooting many more white suspects than black victims, while two-thirds of violent crimes were committed by blacks in the USA. It was also said, by pointing at statistics, that a vast majority of black victims were killed by black persons.

More and more are in favor of abortions, and they come up with all kinds of reasons justifying why it is acceptable—saying that it is a woman’s right to choose, even though God sees otherwise (compare Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:13-16; Exodus 21:22-25).

Attacks from ISIS terrorists are increasing, and targets are spreading throughout the world, testing everyone’s vigilance, all for the purpose of striking fear and chaos. These demon-inspired terrorists claim that they are doing it for “their” god, even though the TRUE God sees otherwise (compare Jeremiah 7:4-7; 22:3, 17; Romans 12:21).

Minority groups today are grabbing more attention, and society as a whole is on edge. Now everyone can be a witness through our technical devices and advancements, and it seems that all need to be aware of everything they say or do to avoid offense—because we are living in a sensitive era. Fear and worry are increasing and tension is building up! We know that times WILL get worse. They will only get better when Christ returns to put an end to this terrible day and age (compare 2 Timothy 3:1; Zephaniah 1:14-17; Joel 2:30-31; Matthew 24:22, 29-30).

Certain minorities are drawing attention to themselves, but for the wrong motives. What about those of us in the Church of God? We are also considered a “minority group” because we believe in something the vast majority of the world does not. Our beliefs are not even in line with what most professing Christians believe; especially, when it comes to some of the most obvious commands in the Bible, like keeping the Sabbath and His Holy Days. They do not understand because they haven’t been called. “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). Instead, society is finding more reasons to accept what is biblically wrong, opening a bigger door for Satan to continue with his destruction, while making it increasingly difficult for true Christians to live God’s Way of Life. Difficult yes, but not impossible. By having God in our lives and obeying Him and His commands, we are able to get through EVERY trial that is set before us (James 1:2-8; Proverbs 3:5-6; Romans 5:3; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 4:4).

We are a little more than halfway through 2016, and we can expect more prophetic events to unfold. We need to keep doing what we have been doing for many years, by proclaiming the good news of the coming Kingdom of God and its accompanying warning to the world as a witness (Matthew 24:14; Isaiah 58:1; Ezekiel 33:1-12), and to keep watching (Matthew 24:42; Luke 21:36). Time is indeed getting shorter and Satan knows it. God knows it. Do we know it?

We need to continue to have a close relationship with God through prayer and Bible study, remaining vigilant with faith and trust in God. We can expect more events to unfold in connection with prophecy, and we need to proceed with the Work that He has set before us to accomplish. Let us not neglect the gift that He has bestowed upon us, as the lights in this world (Ephesians 5:8; Philippians 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:5); the minority (1 Corinthians 1:26-28); the select few God has chosen NOW (1 Peter 2:9); for WE are part of the future (Daniel 7:27; 12:3).

In God’s service and with brotherly love,



Michael Link