

John the Baptist was a prophet of the Lord called to prepare the way for the Messiah. *“And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.”* (Mark 1:4-5)

He underscored God’s standards. He named sins. He implored people to repent and be forgiven. Hey, wait a minute preacher! Does the scripture actually say that he named sins? Let’s say that it would be an educated guess that John the Baptist named sins. You have to name sins, or people don’t know what their sins are!

It is like the people who are using many of the dating apps. If you are going to go out with the guy, he may very well have in his profile and response, “Let’s hook up.” The code language is that our date will be more than dinner and a movie. There is the expectation, if the woman is taken out on the date, they will have sex. Let’s be clear upfront. This is the expectation. It is so common, it was a topic of discussion on a network women’s talk show. The consensus of the circle agreed, “Yeah, sexual compatibility is a significant part of the relationship.” You absolutely need “to take it for a test drive.” “Try it before you by it.” It is an accepted practice. Who is declaring the Truth of God: *“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”* (Hebrews 13:4) Fornication is sin! Don’t assume everyone knows what is sin in our compromised culture. Majority doesn’t set the standard.

And by the way, John called out the self-righteous and deceptive practices of the religious leaders. (Referred to them as snakes). He also addressed King Herod-Antipas and said to his face more than once, *“It’s unlawful (immoral) for you to have your brother’s wife.”* (Mark 6:18) John called out *the King* on his moral sin. Yeah, the prophets of God were Wave-Makers!

I’ve been captured recently by the prophet Jeremiah. God called him to be a prophet as a young man maybe 20.

*The word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Before I formed You in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” “Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”* (Jeremiah 1:4-10)

The words of the prophets speak to faulty and false, cracked and crumbling life-structures that need to be torn down. They speak to roots of lies and evil which must be uprooted. There is demolition and upheaval to correct the corrupt, to solidly build and to plant. Prophets make some waves!

*“How can you say, “We are wise, for we have the law of the Lord,” when actually the lying pen of the scribes has handled it falsely? The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have rejected the word of the Lord, what kind of wisdom do they have?”* (Jeremiah 8:8-9)

It’s not just the Google feed that’s promoting that Bible translators got it wrong when they transcribed the passages on homosexuality. There are seminary professors and pastors reinterpreting the Lord’s Word justifying same-sex unions. “Nothing new under the sun.” The *“lying pen of the scribes are still handling the word of God falsely.”* Beware of the lying pen of the scribes! Prophets of God are called to point out such “errors” to people, to all people.

Jeremiah frequently opposed the king’s favored prophets, gaining more adversaries in high places. Our last glimpse of Jeremiah in Scripture is when he was forcibly taken by a band of Jewish rebels who left Judah to live in Egypt. (Jeremiah 43-45) According to the early church father Tertullian, the Jews stoned Jeremiah to death in Daphne. His “crime” was telling people truths they did not want to hear.

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# Works of Grace

GRACE COVENANT INTERNATIONAL

August 2023

## For His Kingdom and His Glory!



Pastor Josh Benziger received prayer from Dallas Elder.



Pastor Kevin Clancey preached on “Jesus, Our Great High Priest.”



Value Unconditional Director Geony Rucker, spoke on healing for sexual trauma.

The fellowship was sweet, the ministry of the Word was strong and the Presence of the Lord was precious as always. The West Coast gathering for our GCI Midyear Conference is another opportunity for our ministry family and invited guests to connect. Once again, we were grateful for Pastors Steve and Sonya Neubaum and LifePoint Church-Oakdale, CA to host our event. They and their team did a marvelous job. We were also blessed to have some of our international ministers with us: Rob and Lori Mangus-Ghana; Walter Vega-Paraguay; and Tyler Franca-Dominican Republic. They all had the opportunity to share about their ministries. There were a number activities in and around the conference. On Saturday evening prior to the conference, the NEX GEN Leaders met for dinner

and fellowship. It was a wonderful time of connection. We had new faces grace our group. We had a Women’s Luncheon and Men’s Luncheon. Geony Rucker was scheduled to speak regarding, ministry to trafficked and traumatized individuals. Her flight was delayed. Apostle Pam Brown-Trinity Church and Pastor Mary McDonald from Holsey Chapel (both in St. Joseph, MO) presented at the luncheon about VU. Apostle Pam serves as a counsellor and leader of “Embrace the Grace” in VU. Pastor Mary has served on their Executive Board. They shared from their involvement with the ministry. When Geony arrived, midafternoon, we made room in our Tuesday evening service. Her message on the effects of sexual trauma was personal, powerful and compelling.

# Scenes from Our West Coast Ministry Events



**Apostle Pam and Pastor Mary shared at the Women's Luncheon at the Oakdale Country Club.** We had a great attendance. Special thanks to Pastor Colleen Tuggle-Living Hope Christian Fellowship for facilitating, to Janie Marchini for arranging the meeting space and to all who attended.



**Our NEX GEN-West Coast leaders met for dinner at Amanda and Derek Muller's house.** We were blessed to have two new couples join with us: Nick and Megan Shandel-The Well-Waterford, CA and Brice and Maggie Maness-LifePoint Church-Oakdale, CA. God is stirring in this season and the next generation of leaders are arising and connecting.

We were blessed to have Walter Vega-GCI-Paraguay to join us for our conference and retreat. He and Dallas Elder hiked around Pinecrest Lake glorifying God and singing "Tu fidelidad es grande."



**Meet our GCI Executive Board.** This picture is significant as it is rare that all of us can be together at one time, especially including our missionary members. Our Executive Board oversees all of the administration, financial accounts, budgets and policies of GCI. What a great team we have representing our ministries and conducting this important aspect of Kingdom business! From left to right: Missionary Rob Mangus-Ghana, Pastor Buddy Collins-Florida, Pastor Barry Tuggle and Pastor Steve Neubaum-California, Pastor Kevin Clancey-Washington, Pastor Mary McDonald and Apostle Pam Brown-Missouri, GCI Office Manager Linda Wagers, and Missionary Tyler Franca-Dominican Republic. The board includes Ministry Director Dallas Elder. Missionary Bill Eddy-Spain is also part of our team. Our Executive Board meets twice a year. We are grateful for your service!



**Our West Coast Ministers' Retreat at The Lodge Christian Retreat Center-Miwuk, CA** follows our Midyear Ministry Conference. It's an opportunity for our leaders to breathe in the fresh mountain air of the Sierras and to have some "chill-time". We relax, rest, recreate and fellowship. Ministry can be so structured with so many deadlines and responsibilities. It is important to have unstructured renewal moments. We have some worship, transparent sharing about life and ministry, and times of prayer. The Holy Spirit leads us to speak and minister to His precious servants. The Father always prepares a life-giving feast in His Presence for His sons and daughters as we gather on the mountain.



## Reserve Your Room Now! World Conference 2024 April 23-26

Our GCI World Conference will be held at Coral Costa Caribe Resort-Juan Dolio, Dominican Republic. We have secured a block of 20 rooms. **We will begin reserving rooms September 15.** You will need to reserve your room now to assure your accommodations for our conference. This is an all-inclusive resort our DR Mission uses. They have clean, updated rooms, and a beautiful location on the beach. They have nice amenities and conference space. It is 30 minutes from the Santo Domingo airport. We project the per person cost will be \$85 per night and \$250 for the conference (includes airport shuttle). We need to do much advanced planning for this event. **Contact our office to reserve your room and guarantee your accommodations for our GCI World Conference 2024.**

## Register Now!

The Ignite Ministry Conference is September 20-23. Our seminar sessions and workshops offer spiritual encouragement and ministry equipping. You can register by contacting our office, or online at [www.MSIgc.com](http://www.MSIgc.com) See our website for all the details. We hope to see you!



Our next MSI Ministry Training Course will be "Equipped for Spiritual Warfare" taught by Dallas Elder. This three-session Zoom course will be 9am-12:30pm (CDT) over three Saturdays: October 14, 21 and November 4.

## GRACE COVENANT INTERNATIONAL

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## Where Are the Wave-Makers?

By Dallas Elder

Ever hear the phrase: "Don't make waves!"? It is an appeal to "Go with the flow." "Support the status quo." "Don't rock the boat." I shared at our conference in CA that I identified with the Apostle Peter's reference to Lot (Sodom and Gomorrah). "...*A righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)*..." (II Peter 2:7-8) I've been grieved in my soul about the moral decline in our nation. The homosexual lifestyle is being promoted as moral and normal. Sexual promiscuity is becoming an acceptable measure of relationship compatibility. The immoral indoctrination is being urged upon innocent children with little restraint. Who is speaking to the issues on behalf of God and His Word? It seems the Church has become reticent so as not to offend. And, certainly a significant swath of the "church" has totally capitulated in an effort to accept and affirm. In doing so, it has compromised the moral standards of God. My grief is for the young people in mental health crisis, depression, considering suicide and physically damaging themselves. Where are the prophets of God, who boldly declare to the Church and the world, this is wrong?

I've been doing a study of the prophets. God used prophets in every generation to call out sin and evil, and urged people to repent. They warned society of the consequences of their actions and the judgement of God. They countered the culture, rather than being conditioned by it. They boldly declared God's Word in the face of opposing forces. They made waves!

**"The only thing necessary for evil to triumph in the world is that good men do nothing."**  
Edmund Burke

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## IGNITE STRONGER



Men's  
Conference

October  
27-28

The **STRONGER MEN'S CONFERENCE** will be Friday-Saturday, October 27-28 at Holsey Chapel-St. Joseph, MO. This is a gathering of the men across our GCI ministry family to strengthen relationships and go deeper with God. Make your plans to attend this event. Speakers will include: Pastor Kevin Clancey, Martin T. Rucker Sr., Marquis Harris and Dallas Elder.