



The Compass

July-August 2020
Abbreviated Edition

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—Portland, Indiana

Pastoral Perspective — On Prevailing Perseverance Upon Confluence of Critical World Crises

As excerpted from a Time Magazine piece on the twentieth century theologian Karl Barth published on Friday, May 31, 1963 regarding his counsel to students of theology nearly a century before now:

“[Barth] recalls that... he [had] advised young theologians ‘to take your Bible and take your newspaper—and read both. But interpret newspapers from your Bible.’”

The article goes on to give us more of Barth’s thoughts on journalists and their place in the world:

“Newspapers, he says, are so important that ‘I always pray for the sick, the poor, journalists, authorities of the state and the church - in that order. Journalists form public opinion. They hold terribly important positions. Nevertheless, a theologian should never be formed by the world around [them] - either East or West. [One] should make [one’s] vocation to show both East and West that they can live without a clash. Where the peace of God is proclaimed, there is peace on earth... implicit. Have we forgotten the Christmas message?’”¹

Visions of Christmas in July 2020? What better way to observe summertime for me this week during a global pandemic with international mass protests, civil unrest and worldwide economic uncertainty than myself visiting the N Jersey shore on an uncrowded socially distanced Fathers’ Day weekend with two of my daughters and son-in-law (J.G., Ph.D.’20), saying goodbye to past frequent oceanside jaunts from Princeton seminary days, giving thanks for blessings in celebration of commencements followed by their pending imminent move while grieving in lament, missing anticipatedly the loss of proximate opportunity for such respite and times of refreshing in the near future! Having a daughter attending college presently studying journalism, and another one whose most recent degree in divinity involves pastoral studies in practical theology, the eminent 20th century pastoral theologian’s wise words of counsel bear witness prominently on my mind for our own present day and time of ill, evil, and dread in the new millennium. Present leaders of prominent theological institutions in our nation’s land forthrightly offer forthtelling prophetic thoughts and sobering sentiments of late.

“When the President and other national leaders became aware of the deadly nature of COVID-19, where was the urgent effort to marshal national resources to create the necessary tests and the PPE that we knew we would need? Where was the effort to bring the country together to create a united front against this deadly disease? Where was the spirit of international cooperation to foster collaboration with other countries when facing a global pandemic? These are not only political questions; they are moral questions — questions with life and death in the balance.”²

I grow tired these days of popularized nonsensical responses unduly influenced by polarizing politicized propaganda in the face of the staggering confluence of critical crises our world is experiencing today. In the midst of these cross streams of debating rejoinders, I judge they will eventually prove to be unhelpful remarks even and especially when issued from positions of authority over us. In and through the cacophony of belabored discussions, beloved, we shall not cease nor desist in the call for moral leadership to rise above, to stand up for the cause of the oppressed, the disenfranchised, the afflicted, the marginalized, the needy, and the most vulnerable among us. I pray the Lord deliver—save us from our own selves, from ignorance, from incompetence, from apathy, from neglect, from inaction, from senselessness, from stupidity, from hopelessness, from resignation, from disease, from evil, from death. O Lord, in your mercy.... maranatha • even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly

May the better angels of our nature prevail, preside, and persevere by providence of providential provision for all humanity.

In the grip of grace and peace,
—*Pastor Rex Espiritu*

¹ <http://barth.ptsem.edu/about-cbs/faq>

² <https://www.ptsem.edu/news/a-call-for-moral-leadership> — Craig Barnes, [Princeton Theological Seminary](#) • Greg Jones, [Duke Divinity School](#) • Serene Jones, [Union Theological Seminary](#) • Jan Love, [Candler School of Theology - Emory University](#) • Greg Sterling, [Yale Divinity School](#) • Emilie Townes, [Vanderbilt Divinity School](#)



PW BRUNCH CANCELLED

The PW Spring Brunch that was scheduled for Saturday, July 18 has been cancelled due to the Covid-19 situation. Hopefully, we will see you at the Fall Brunch.

<u>July</u>	
01	Bev Arnold Larry Hiatt
03	David Loyd
04	Dennis Ford
06	Suzie Arnold
10	Linda Rodden
12	Tom McCord
13	Sam Benirschke
19	Ron Bisel
20	Paul Byrum
23	Becca James
24	Nina Lee Hecko
27	Carol Knight
29	Meg Mauger
31	Violet Trinidad
<u>August</u>	
09	Kathy Ayers
10	Sarona Goodrich
14	Glen Priest
15	Brooklynn Byrum
23	Phil Frantz Kadin Ross
24	Sandra Bailey
25	Seth Rodden
27	Donna Haggengos
30	Lucas Rodden

SUNDAY SERVICES ON FACEBOOK

While Sunday Worship remains postponed due to Covid-19, Pastor Rex officiates Sunday morning worship via video on Facebook.

You can access his posts and worship videos at <https://www.facebook.com/FirstPCPortland/>.

MISSION OFFERINGS MISSED

Due to Sunday Worship services being postponed because of Covid-19, we have missed collecting for two special mission offerings; One Great Hour of Sharing and Pentecost.

In a world of disaster, hunger, and oppression, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity.

The three programs supported by **One Great Hour of Sharing** - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People - all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

Pentecost Offering invests in our greatest resource by helping youth begin life with a solid foundation of faith.

Psalm 71 testifies that a foundation of faith established during childhood helps ensure lifelong faith and service. The patterns and lessons established during these formative years continue to bear fruit throughout a person's life. By giving to the Pentecost Offering, you are nurturing the faith of those who are the church to come — children, youth, and young adults.

Last year our church was recognized by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a **15-year Four for Four Congregation**. This means that for the past 15 years, our church as given to all four special offerings of the Presbyterian Church.

It would be wonderful if we could continue that tradition of giving even through the midst of Covid-19.

If you would like to give, you may drop your offerings at the church office or mail them to the church at 402 North Ship Street, Portland IN 47371. Please note which offerings you wish to support on your check or envelope.