

*Let us encourage one another—
and all the more as you see
the Day approaching.*
Hebrews 10:25 NIV

Proclaiming Truth in Perilous Times **Marlene Bagnull**

I had just given one of my Christian writers' seminars in our nation's capital. Many of the people who attended made commitments to write God's answer. Fervently, I prayed for them and myself that we would be faithful to God's call.

That evening, my hostess took me on a tour of the city. I had been to D.C. several times during the day but never at night. In the moonlight, the buildings were even more magnificent. But I was not an awestruck tourist taking in the sights. Rather, I began to grieve. It was as if God was showing me the heartbeat of my nation, and the heartbeat was weak.

As we left the city an hour later, we drove past the Lincoln Memorial. "Child, not one stone will be left standing on another," I felt the Lord speak to my heart. Never have I been so aware of His presence, so sure of His voice. I wept for the city and for my nation.

"Are you sure it was the Lord?" people have asked me. "I wish I thought it wasn't Him," I've replied. Only time will tell. What I do know is that Jesus is coming—perhaps soon, perhaps in my lifetime and yours. And I'm reminded of Jesus' words before He went to the cross. "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work" (John 9:4 NIV).

When I wrote this chapter in 1999, millennium fever had even non-Christians believing that history is moving to a climax. So many pieces of the end-times puzzle were falling into place—even more so today thirteen years later. World peace hangs by a slender thread as North Korea threatens to launch missiles, Syria is engaged in a brutal civil war, and Iran continues to threaten to wipe Israel off the map.

Financially our nation is teetering on the brink of collapse. Morally we're in a free fall. The persecution of Christians is intensifying, and technology now exists for the mark of the beast.

I am not about to set a date for the Lord's return or pretend to be an eschatologist. Most of Revelation and Daniel remain a mystery to me. I've read a couple of end-times novels and really don't care to read more. The scenario of what may be right around the corner could make for sleepless nights, especially since I don't know whether the Rapture will be pretribulation, midtribulation, or post tribulation. My gut-level feeling is that God isn't going to zap us out of the dark days that are coming when the light of Christ's love will be most desperately needed. But I may be wrong. So may the pre-trib crowd. Again, only God knows.

Even Jesus said, “No one knows the date and hour when the end will be—not even the angels. No, nor even God’s Son. Only the Father knows” (Matt. 24:36 TLB).

So what *do* we know in these days of uncertainty? Where *do* we find security if the nest egg we may have been able to accumulate was wiped out in the recession or a prolonged period of unemployment? How do we let our light shine in the encroaching darkness?

“Be prepared, for you don’t know what day your Lord is coming” (Matt. 24:42 TLB). Just as no one expected (at least I certainly didn’t) that the USSR would collapse or the Berlin Wall crumble, the Lord’s coming will be just as unexpected. “The world will be at ease—banquets and parties and weddings—just as it was in Noah’s time before the sudden coming of the flood; people wouldn’t believe what was going to happen until the flood actually arrived and took them all away. So shall my coming be,” Jesus said (Matt. 24:37-39 TLB). We need to live in a state of expectancy rather than allow ourselves to be lulled into complacency or a business-as-usual, laid-back approach to the work of ministry.

“Stay true to the Lord,” the apostle Paul wrote from a Roman prison (Phil. 4:1 TLB). If we are to proclaim truth to our dying world, it is critically important that we understand what truth is. More than ever before, we need to be grounded in His Word, so if it were to be taken from us, it would, indeed, be buried deep in our hearts. Not only do we need to know the truth, we need to be committed to the truth, regardless the price tag. Now is *not* the time to compromise, not the time to bow the knee to any other god than the Lord Jesus Christ. No matter how harmless it may seem to “bend just a little” so as not to offend, not to be seen as a fanatic, we must never forget that Jesus said, “I am the Way—yes, and the Truth and the Life. No one can get to the Father except by means of me” (John 14:6 TLB).

“Let not your heart be troubled,” Jesus said. “You are trusting God, now trust in me” (John 14:1 TLB). Even though the world as we have known it may seem to be spinning out of control, we need to remember that none of what is happening is taking God by surprise. He is still in control! He is “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End” (Rev. 21:6 NIV). And despite the turmoil around us, He promises the gift of peace of mind and heart (see John 14:27). We do not need to fear nor be consumed by worry. He has promised not to abandon us or leave us as “orphans in the storm” (John 14:18).

Yes, the future seems frightening. The unknown strikes fear in many people. But as Christians, we do not need to get caught up in dire doomsday predictions. We know how it all ends! “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God” (Rev. 19:1 NIV). We can and must “hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful” (Heb. 10:23 NIV). In His strength, and through His power, we can lay aside all of our self-doubts and feelings of inadequacy and boldly “write His answer.”

Responding to God’s Call to Write

Read the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3,
asking the Lord to speak to you and strengthen you for the work He is calling you to do.

Excerpted from *Write His Answer—A Bible Study for Christian Writers* by Marlene Bagnall. Phoenix, AZ: ACW Press, 1999. © 1999 Marlene Bagnall. [Click here](#) to order an autographed copy at a discount.