



*Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads,  
because your redemption is drawing near.*

Luke 21:28 RSV

March 2022

Picture Credit: Ivan Khivrenko

Dear Friends,

What decisive events have taken place between this and our last newsletter! Russia launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine. The US, EU and Western allies have ramped up sanctions against Russia, targeting banks, oil refineries, and military exports.

Mother Basilea recorded in 1980 that newspapers and magazines were openly stating that thermonuclear, chemical and biological weapons will inevitably be used in the next war. How we see this coming true before our very eyes with Russia firing missiles into Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear power plant and threatening to use chemical weapons. Ukraine's President called for Europe to wake up!

The fuse has only to be lit and a world-wide explosion will ensue, a catastrophe more terrible than the earth has ever seen. This is exactly what Russia's President issued as a dire threat to Western nations on Thursday 6 March 2022, saying the West would face "consequences greater than any you have faced in history" if the West become involved with his invasion of Ukraine.

We all know the panic of a crisis – round the world people are facing economic collapse, violent war, political insecurity, and the global pandemic or endemic as we have now moved to. In these moments of crisis, many have had their eyes turned to their country's leaders and world leaders in the hope that they will be able to give answers and implement solutions.

Yet however good their efforts are, however hard they try, we know that their ability to control a crisis is limited. There is only so much they can do. Faced with impossible situations, human leaders are limited in power and insight. So, if Presidents, Prime Ministers, and other key leaders are not in control, then who is? That question is one we begin to ask in times of crisis and in days of panic. But, whatever the circumstances or situations we face – each of us have to reckon with this question personally. Jesus is the one in supreme control, even at the very moment when things seem most out of control and seem as if the present days are dark.

Recent weeks have brought true crisis and catastrophe to so many in our unsettled world. The reason why it has grown dark and so many people are suffering and are in pain in this world, is because so many have turned away from God to live their own way, without reference to Him. We have become alienated from Him; we have invited His judgement for the evil things that we have done, policies and laws we have come to embrace; and we experience the fruit of that rebellion as the beauty of life ends again and again in tragedy. In almost every country the Churches are coming under increasing darkness.

Today, the persecution of Christians is no longer restricted to anti-God countries. Even now alarming signs can be observed in the once Christian nations of the West, where hatred of Christians is being roused and people are even urged to prosecute, and imprison them. Such inhuman challenges are already being tolerated without opposition, and in some cases are being approved of.

We only have to look at the new anti-religious Victorian Conversion Therapy Law. As of 17 February 2022, one of the most anti-religious laws in the western world is now in force in the State of Victoria. The Victorian government passed the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 in early 2021 with implementation delayed for a year to allow the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission time to equip itself to exercise the extensive powers given to it under the new law.

The Act is in force. The Commission is ready to start policing an Act that particularly scrutinises Christian churches, organisations and individuals who believe and teach orthodox Biblical doctrines of sexuality and identity.

For the first time in an Australian law, prayer is specifically outlawed. Not only that, Victorians who experience unwanted same sex attraction or identity confusion are banned from seeking spiritual or therapeutic help, which in many cases has radically transformed their lives for the better. In fact, this Victorian Act erases their rights by formal legal declaration.

Many Christians who stand on the commandments of the Bible are having to leave and resign from their professions as a result of the restrictions and stipulations imposed upon them; Christians on the staff or with responsible positions are coming under requirements that they feel unable to meet for the sake of conscience. Nor will this hatred stop there. Once it is able to exert its full power, it will lead beyond discrimination and scorn to arrest and imprisonment, as we now are seeing through the new laws implemented in Australia that support this.

Thus, great darkness lies over the nations of the earth, over believers and non-believers alike. Fear and dread have seized many at the thought, "When the anti-God religion take-over occurs in more countries, we here in the West may suffer a similar fate to the people who previously suffered under these regimes throughout the history of their respective countries." Large populations were slaughtered – thousands have died of starvation, and to this day millions are suffering acute misery as refugees. The forces of destruction have been unbridled in their fury. The hatred conceived by an atheistic ideology, hostile to God, is being vented especially on Christians, who want to stand firm in their faith in their Saviour.

Perhaps we ask the question in our hearts: Why are so many countries being laid waste by those that are anti-God, abandoning their countries to destruction, chaos and death? How can God allow this? The answer is simple and quite clear: wickedness is overflowing today.

Godlessness and the resultant lawlessness; bondage to sin, and hatred of God – all of this has plunged the nations into the darkness of violent protests, terrorism and wars, including the threat of nuclear/chemical warfare, as we have seen unfold in the invasion of Ukraine.

This darkness now covering the earth is therefore God's answer to the darkness of sin throughout the world. Sin breeds death, gloom, despair, ruin and misery. All this follows as God's righteous judgement. And we can only say with Daniel, "We have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws... Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame..." (Daniel 9:5, 7a NIV). In other words, we are receiving the due reward of our deeds when darkness now engulfs our nations.

So often we have not honoured God, nor truly loved Jesus, but served our own desires: status, possessions, prestige, recognition, people and careers. How often have our hearts clung to these things, often being in bondage to them, seeking only the love, praise and approval of others. Have we not time and again cowardly conformed to the world, a world that already bears antichristian characteristics? We can only humble ourselves in view of all the times we have loved ourselves and our lives, instead of denying ourselves every day anew in uncompromising discipleship that is fitting as a follower of Jesus.

Yes, just as long ago the disciples left Jesus on His own in Gethsemane and fled at His arrest, His followers today are also forsaking Jesus in many ways. This happens ever anew by Christians not truly taking a stand with laws and policies that are against God's commandments. How often Christians have not made a united stand for Him, but sided with the voices and policies that cause destruction. All because we do not want to suffer and bear disgrace with Jesus!

Our sins and the sins of our nation are causing God to oppose and deal with us. Yes, we are bringing down upon us His judgement if we do not repent, as we are warned in many passages of Scripture, including the New Testament. What will save us from God's judgement of wrath? The way of deliverance is to follow the Lord's challenge, in contrition and repentance turn away from all evil and partnership with the works of darkness! Yes, we must pray for the time of grace to be extended for a short while again, so that we can prepare for the hour of utmost darkness. It will be terrible when the wrath of God descends to judge the world. God in His infinite patience and mercy has restrained His wrath for so long.

Those who believe in Jesus, love Him, follow Him and His commandments and do ever anew as His word says, will experience something different, something wonderful in this age of darkness and terror. They will experience that which God has promised to those who made a clean break with all that is dark and evil. Their hearts will be filled with light at the very time when darkness and sorrow prevail. The Lord will arise upon them, and His glory will appear over them (cf. Isaiah 60:2). They will be immersed in the radiance of God and experience heavenly comfort.

The prophesy of Jesus, "You will be hated by all nations for my name's sake" (Matthew 24:9 RSV), will soon be fulfilled here too in our once Christian nations, and so this is why it is we who are being called now to raise our heads. But how can we raise our heads in the assurance that "our redemption is drawing near"? Are we not living in the pre-Antichristian times?

Regardless of the situation the world is in, this is the very time to raise our heads. For whoever lives under hell-like conditions, in pain and suffering, should raise their head to heaven. We should look up to the heavenly world from where help will come – from the Lord who made heaven and earth. Soon we shall no longer be able to expect any help from people here on earth, for soon there will be no more rights for those who believe in Jesus, those who take a stand against sin and defend the commandments of God. However, there will always be one source of help available. Those who raise their head and look up will experience it. Where are we to look? To Him who alone has power to help – to our Lord Jesus Christ, whose help is unfailing. For not only does He have all power at His disposal to help us, but His heart is overflowing with love for us. He is, therefore, not only able to help, but wants to! Of course, not all will be spared persecution, but we will experience very real miracles in the midst of persecution, as it is recorded by the Christians long ago in the Acts of the Apostles.



Amid all the perils and distress of our dark and troubled pre-Antichristian times as affliction increases all over the world, amid economic crisis and personal hardships, amid fear and anxiety we shall experience miracles to the extent that we raise our heads. For now the time has come when God will reveal Himself more than ever as the One whose name is "Wonderful". He can only prove what He can do and demonstrate His ability to help when we are no longer able to receive any help from

elsewhere, and when we ourselves are no longer capable of doing anything and have no one to whom we can turn, but to Him alone.

Then God will show that He always has help at hand; the greatness of His power and love is immeasurable, and so too the help He has to offer. Yes, in the coming times we shall experience in a special way that we have a God who works miracles – and we can depend upon Him to perform these miracles as surely as He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Because God is greater than we can ever imagine, He knows of a way to help us when we can no longer see one. If we commit everything to Him, relying completely on Him who is the almighty God and who as our all-loving Father has taken on the responsibility to care for us, then He will pave the way for us. As we place our hand in His, He guides us step by step. We do not need to know how the way will continue – for our hand is in His, which will guide us through the darkest valley. His hand is big and strong when we feel weak. In His loving care He holds our small hand in His, so that we do not fall but reach the glorious goal.

So let us surrender our will and our entire lives to the Father in childlike love and implicit trust; then He will lead us on, and He always leads aright. He always paves the way for us and we can entrust ourselves unreservedly to Him, for He not only has infinite power, but loves us as no one on earth can love us.

Thus in situations of utter hopelessness God will prove His fatherly love and care. Indeed, the very hairs on our heads are counted, and He hears the faintest cries in our hearts when we are suffering need and distress in body, soul or spirit.



Yes, if in a time like ours we raise our heads, we shall experience as never before the ability of the Father and our Lord Jesus to deliver us. Then we shall be able to say like Job, "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted" (Job 42:2 NIV).

How important it is, therefore, to take Jesus' challenge seriously and act upon it. "Look up, raise your heads", that is to say, tear your eyes and thoughts away from all the gloom and misery that you see on this earth, away from all the diabolical sins and darkness of the world. Turn your eyes upon Jesus Christ. His countenance is shining upon us in immeasurable love, majesty, strength and beauty. Eternal and unchanging, He shines upon us as the Sun of suns, which never sets however dark and infernal it will grow here on earth. On the contrary, the greater the gloom, the more powerfully Jesus Christ will shine into our darkness as the Sun. He wants His rays to penetrate our dejected hearts and fill them with consolation and light.

So let us look ever anew to this bright and shining Sun, our Lord Jesus Christ, when the hardships now increase, and we ourselves shall become little suns that will bring comfort and light to others in their troubles and despair and that by reflecting this light from our lives we may even stir the consciences of those walking in darkness.

Yes, we shall then defeat the enemy, Satan, whose one objective is to paralyse and ensnare us. He wants to make us lose confidence in who God is through the misery and fears of this dark age. When we "look to Jesus", we shall experience deliverance from the prison of self, and from anxiety and worry and darkness of this world.

How wonderful God's purposes are! The very sufferings that we so often wish would go away actually help us. When in our distress we call upon Jesus and look to Him, He lets us experience His love, power, aid and deliverance as never before in our lives. All of a sudden our lives are spiritually enriched, because we have come to know the heart of Jesus. He Himself draws near to us, and in His love He lets our hearts experience heaven in the midst of hell.

Suffering is intended to set us free from all that is earthly, from all that fills our lives in the wrong sense, enslaving us - the dubious joys of affluence, our love of comfort, our self-complacency, false attachments to our possessions, businesses, careers, and all our daily cares and joys. Why? Because we have so often neglected the most important thing: to love God above all else and to give Him our wishes and will, the best of our time, and dear ones, our money, and all our innermost desire. If we do this now, even though it hurts, we shall experience in the depths of distress that Jesus is the Fairest and Purest One of all, the Source of Joy, our Saviour, the King of kings, our Bridegroom, our Light and Life.

To attain this objective and grant us the greatest happiness of all, Jesus is not merely knocking at the door of our hearts with the distressing news about Ukraine's plight, the sufferings of war, persecution and the great misery in many countries throughout the world. No, soon we ourselves in the West could be facing such times.

This is why He wants to reach us even at this late hour with His rousing warning and challenge, "Wake up!" We see from the "oil war" and subsequent rising prices, lack of food, heating, and chaos this all serves to this end. Today we are experiencing that such things are beginning to take place so that we may raise our heads to Him, who alone can give us life in all its fullness.

If we abide in this love for God, a love that suffers with Him, we shall experience that which is written in John 14:23 - He will love us in return and make His dwelling with us. Then, out of love, we can do all things and suffer all things through Jesus Christ, who dwells in us. When He becomes our sole love, we shall find in Him the joy and fullness of life we seek.

## Prayer for the Time of Testing

Lord Jesus,

*Be my sole possession today in joy and suffering, so that in the time of testing You will be my deepest consolation and foremost love, inspiring me to follow You wherever You go.*

*Grant that I may never leave You. Let me always choose You and never the easy way out, even in hardship and adversity.*

*In the hour of trial let this love be alive in my heart, so that I may comfort You, glorify Your name and make it known to many.*

*I believe that in Your love You will never abandon me and that in my hour of greatest need my prayers will be answered. Your faithfulness is my shield and refuge.*

Amen

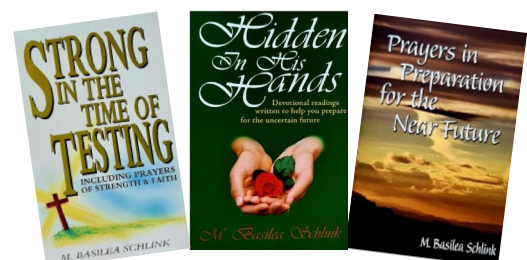
*Taken from "Prayers in Preparation for the Near Future" by M. Basilea Schlink*

GOD  
in His  
almighty love  
always  
has exactly  
as much  
strength  
and aid  
prepared  
for you  
as you need.

M. Basilea Schlink

*For all your prayers, friendship and support  
we send you our heartfelt thanks and we pray,  
may each one of you be blessed abundantly!*

*The Evangelical Sisters of Mary*



*Most of this Newsletter has been taken directly from M. Basilea's original  
September 1979 Newsletter to Friends.*

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