

Sharing the good news of Jesus and His Kingdom and equipping the church to do the same.



Greg West, Evangelist

Addressing Evil and Suffering

How do we make sense of the great evil in this world? How do we not yield to despair in the face of such evil? I am, like you, a bit overwhelmed with the tragedies in our nation: the murders at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, the murders at the Taiwanese Church in California and the murders at Tops Friendly Market in Buffalo, New York. The list goes on and on.

Our “world view” is a big deal. It is how we perceive reality. Everyone has a worldview, even children. Their world view may include the tooth fairy, but it is still a world view. The Christian, or Biblical, world view says that in the beginning the world was “very good.” There was a time on earth when evil did not have a foothold. Yet, evil entered and humanity fell for it. Satan, a fallen angel, rebelled against God leading humanity into temptation. Humanity rejected God by turning to their own ways. This resulted in separation from the good and holy God. Jesus said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18). Jesus clearly believed in fallen angels and the demonic realm. Evil has a personality.

Of course, there are many skeptics who don't believe this perspective. I would challenge them to explain the

source of evil in the world in a way that is coherent and comprehensive. It seems to me that the Christian world view makes more sense than any other world view that I've heard. The demonic realm is real and evil to its core. Evil also has found a foothold in humanity. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn articulates the Biblical worldview well in this statement, “The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either -- but right through every human heart -- and through all human hearts.”

Why does God allow evil in the world? Great question! What does God want most from humans? LOVE! For love to be real it must be freely chosen. A robot cannot love! A puppet cannot love. God could eliminate all evil and suffering. However, this would cancel out our freedom and thus our ability to love. **Human freedom is more important than the absence of evil.** We do not need to despair in the face of evil. Jesus clearly demonstrated his power over the demonic and gives that power and authority to his followers. Jesus came to give us new hearts, to not

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He Gets Us is a ministry based upon Jesus' full knowledge of human suffering due to his personal experience of it as a man. When God chose to take on human flesh, he did not make it easy on himself by opting for a wealthy or esteemed family. In contrast, he became the lowest of the low and chose a life of poverty and persecution. As the organization's website says, “Jesus understood what life was like for people in his day – especially for the marginalized. He was drawn to those on the fringes because he was one too: An immigrant. Homeless Arrested. Bullied.”

Online Evangelism

As a man, Jesus experienced the full extent of humanity's struggles. He Gets Us specifically mentions on their website how Jesus, like many people, suffered from: anxiety, broken relationships and loneliness. He Gets Us takes these truths to heart and seeks to combat today's divisive and volatile environment with compassion.

Recently, Life in His Name and New Town UMC have partnered with the He Gets Us campaign. If you respond to a He Gets Us advertisement, your inquiry will be filtered via zip code and directed to Greg West.

Overcoming Dangerous Distraction

BY ASHLEY KLINE

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Last month I had the pleasure and honor of hosting Dr. Ellen Davis from Duke Divinity. I have long admired Dr. Davis' scholarship and look up to her as one of the few females in biblical studies of broad renown. The time I spent with Dr. Davis was pleasurable, enlightening and, most importantly, convicting. I was excited to hear that Dr. Davis wanted to be picked up from the house of her good friend, Wendell Berry. For those who do not know, Wendell Berry is a Kentuckian author and activist. Anyone who is familiar with Berry's work knows he enjoys a simple and sustainable lifestyle in the beautiful rolling hills of Kentucky. His life is based around living in the moment. Thus, he limits distractions by refusing to purchase a computer, not owning a television, and only having a landline telephone.

Despite knowing that Berry enjoys an off the grid style of living, when we went to pick up Dr. Davis my travel companion and I were shocked to see that the address for the Berry's was not even on the map! We decided to simply put in the address to Port Royal, KY where he is based, and planned to call his wife Tanya once close. After several wrong turns, driving longer than we should have without signal and waiting for directions from Tanya, we finally made it to the Berry's house an hour later than planned. In our frenzied state, we also tried to back down the driveway upon arrival once I remembered halfway into our ascent the instructions Tanya had given us for our own good: park at the bottom of the driveway. Their driveway was incredibly steep, causing us to veer off into a

ditch while coming down. Not only did we get stuck, but also crashed into the Berry's wooden fence! Luckily there was damage neither to the car nor the fence. As my friend and I struggled to find our way to the Berry's, we were able to make some incredible memories we would not have gotten the chance to otherwise. Additionally, this gave us the chance to bond with Dr. Davis as we all shared many good laughs about the situation.

During her trip to Kentucky, Dr. Davis spoke in one of the seminary's chapel services. One of the major points of her sermon was that a distraction free lifestyle can positively impact our relationship with God. Reading Scripture is hard and making sense of it can and does take up a great deal of mental energy. Thus, "distraction is the bane of the Christian life" to use Dr. Davis' own words. She stated that we should approach Scripture the way we approach a friend, or someone whose opinion we value. This means giving Scripture the respect it deserves by intentionally avoiding distractions, actively listening, and hopefully not putting words in its mouth or making assumptions about what it is going to say. Would you pick up your phone to text, check social media, or play a game while your friend was speaking, unless there was an emergency? If not, then we should not do so as we listen to God while searching the Scriptures.

Dr. Davis concluded by saying that the only way we can combat our propensity for distraction is to focus upon the call God has placed on our lives and strive towards whatever calling that may be.

June 2022 Global Methodist Church Launches



The Global Methodist Church, a new denomination, launched on May 1. There has been division in the United Methodist Church for many years and the split has been a long time coming. John Wesley has a sermon on division in the church titled *On Schism* in which he says that schism is always a grievous thing, but sometimes necessary.

The stated mission of the Global Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly."



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Addressing Evil and Suffering

only forgive our sin, but to break its power in us, so that we do not live for evil and sin, but for God and for good.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, our calling to make disciples, be peacemakers, reconcile the lost, bring healing and lift up Jesus are urgent. I encourage you each day to draw near to Christ, to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13), receive from him and be available throughout your day to be his ambassadors wherever you are. You are called! You are part of God's solution as His Kingdom overcomes the wickedness of this fallen world. Ultimately, the Word declares that the demonic realm will be judged and cast away forever (Revelation 20:10). Then good news follows:

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'" Revelation 21:3-4

Praying Thv Kingdom Come.

*Sharing Christ, Evidence for
the Resurrection and Special
Ministry Update*



<https://youtu.be/N0NTL2uINBk>