



THE GOSPEL COALITION

BC • CANADA

Philippians 1:27 (ESV)

²⁷ Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,

July 29, 2017



Coming Events

Oct. 31 - Nov. 2 Conference: Hope on the edge of a precipice.
See Conference details on the TGC-BC website.

<https://tgc-bc.com>

Together we can!

Welcome to the first issue of the Gospel Coalition, British Columbia Chapter newsletter.

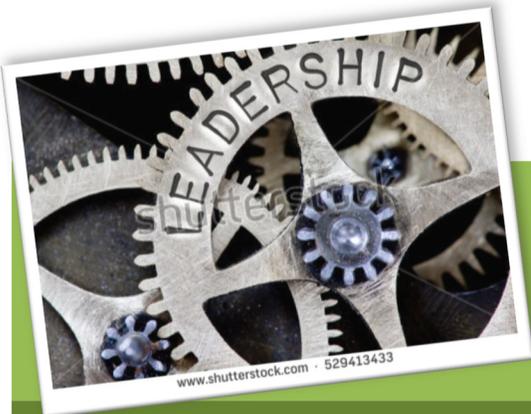
It has long been my dream that we as a group of evangelical believers could come together in mutual support and fellowship. I believe God is calling us together for such a time as this. As we are increasingly being exposed to the world's agenda we need to take time and effort to bolster and support one another. We have a powerful message that overcomes the world and this message needs to be heard throughout British Columbia.

I am so grateful for those of you have recently signed up to be a member of our local Chapter. I encourage you to spread the word to others and encourage them to sign up. We also need your thoughts and ideas on how we as a group can effectively serve our greater community. Please communicate, we do want and need to hear from each of you.

Pastor Rob Godard (Director TGC-BC)

Leadership

Leadership is not something you do to people.
It's something you do with people





Sovereign Suffering

Pastor Matt Shantz

Central Community Church

God is Both Sovereign and Suffering and therefore Caring and Trustworthy

Joseph, in faithful obedience to his father (37:12-17), was approaching his brothers in love when they betrayed him and sold him for pieces of silver (37:23-28). He was wrongfully accused and captured and paid the penalty: just for the unjust (39:13-20). Jesus, in faithful obedience to his father, approached His brothers in love and was betrayed, sold for pieces of silver, captured, wrongfully accused, and paid the ultimate penalty: just for the unjust.

In Genesis 42:21, the brothers confess to each other, “we saw his distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen”. Do you hear the anguish in that? The pain of rejection and heartbreak that would have been in Joseph’s voice and soul? Consider Jesus, on the cross, bearing the penalty of our sin, as He cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mk 15:34). In order to satisfy justice and punish sin so that in love He could forgive and receive us, God had to bear the penalty for sin within Himself. Jesus took the punishment we deserved, including being cut off from the Father. So God bore infinite agony Himself, out of love for us.

When we lose a loved one we have had close relationship with for years, the pain of loss is incredibly deep. God the Father and God the Son had eternal intimacy. That’s a long time! And on the cross, Jesus experienced the silent turning away of God the Father as His holy wrath over sin was poured out on the Son. See, God’s Sovereign will accomplished the most ultimate good (salvation for those who confess Jesus as Lord) from the most evil act (the crucifying as guilty the sinless Son of God). What this reveals to us is that God is not distant in your sufferings. He is intimately close. God is not unfamiliar with suffering. The most evil act was experienced most deeply by Him. Therefore, we can trust Him.

Hebrews 2:9-10:

...Jesus, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

So we have not a distant God unfamiliar with suffering and weakness but one who walked through suffering in a way far greater than we ever will. That’s compelling news

Lastly, after God sovereignly sent Joseph through slavery, imprisonment, and abandonment, He raised Joseph up in power. Using him to save many from death via starvation. Joseph was seated at the right hand of the most powerful person in the world, Pharaoh. Jesus suffered and died in order to save many and is now seated at the right hand of the Father over all things.

Therefore we have a Saviour who suffered and meets us in our suffering. A Saviour who has power over the grave. A Saviour who is seated at the right hand of the sovereign Father, working all things for the good of those who love Him, and who will one day, when He returns, right every wrong and make all things new.

Timothy Keller, in his book, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*, wrote, “Because God is both sovereign and suffering, we know our suffering always has meaning even though we cannot see it”. Will you believe it? Will you rest in the comfort that our Saviour knows suffering? Will you rest in the truth that every evil will be made right, that the sovereign purposes of God include your hurts, pains, tragedies, and heartbreaks? That they have purpose? I beckon you to believe it. And as Charles Spurgeon preached, allow God’s sovereignty in the midst of suffering to be “the pillow upon which you rest your head”.



Over the past few months we have been asking the question. “Why a BC Chapter?” With the help of our steering Committee we recently worked through this question and we are excited to share the following purpose.

Purpose Statement

We Glorify God in our promotion of Gospel Centred ministry throughout British Columbia:

- **We** demonstrate our unity in the Spirit through a collaborative network of pastors and church leaders.
- **We** advocate for principles and practices that proclaim the transforming Gospel.
- **We** stir one another up to love and good works.
- **We** strive side by side so that we might stand firm in one spirit, for the faith of the Gospel.

Putting Feet to the Dream

In crafting our TGC-BC Purpose Statement we have given voice to the suggestions expressed by our survey participants that TGC-BC church leaders need to work together across denominational boundaries.

Often times the real intention of a “Purpose Statement” lies in between the lines. We share common cause in our desire to bring glory to our Lord but we tend to work in church and denominational silos. How much more effective could we be, if could find a way to combine our resources, to mutually support one another, to provide hope to the wounded or share great ideas for ministry? The Gospel Coalition does a wonderful job at providing resources, teaching and conferences. The missing ingredient for many of us is the closer supportive relationships with fellow leaders in our geographical area. One of the words we often use to describe this desired relationship is “affinity” for one another. The dictionary term for the word affinity implies an inherent likeness or agreement; close resemblance or connection. Is this not what Christ had in mind for His people?

Philippians 2:1–2 (ESV) So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

I think we would all agree that we cannot accomplish God’s perfect plan without some heavenly help and I would encourage each of you to place TGC-BC on your daily prayer list. If you know of leaders or situations that could use some support or encouragement please reach out and we will bring resources to the situation. Remember this is your organization and will only be as successful as our combined contributions. Write us and give us your thoughts.



The ten greatest threats to the church.

Over the next few issues we want to examine the 10 greatest threats to churches in BC. We have asked each member of our council to choose a top 10, and then to help us understand as leaders how we can protect our churches (and our own lives) from these threatening realities.

As we understand these threats we can begin to respond to them in a way that prepares the church in BC for her pursuit of purity and health in her mission to be in the world but not of the world for the glory of God.

One of the greatest threats to the church is:

An un-biblical view of God

A few years ago, I was travelling from Vancouver to Prince George, and the person sitting next to me, when she found out I was a pastor shared that she had made up her own god. She was serious, and as we kept talking, she shared she was a little tired with that god, so was thinking of making up another one. Shocking and stupid, and yet so many people are shifting from a Biblical view of God, to one of their own making. Happy to call it god, and yet it is so far from who God has revealed Himself to be, people have chosen a god who loves them on their terms, and who lets them do whatever they want so that they can somehow find happiness their way. It is time to discover, and display the greatness of who God has revealed Himself to be in His word, as TGC churches.

A.W. Tozer has rightly said, "What comes into your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you...for this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself"

An unbiblical view of God tends to throw the church into one of two ditches: 1. Reverence without intimacy; 2. Intimacy without reverence. Treating God as a buddy that you hang out with, and does whatever you want, or as someone you can't approach or have a relationship damages the hope of authentic relationship.

Perhaps for us in evangelical churches in BC, the issue is a familiarity with God, without fear (ditch 2). A flippant approach to the Holy One of Scripture, that ignores His Majesty, and Holiness and refuses to obey His Word if the cost feels to high. This is dangerous in that it leads not only to disobedience and despair, but without correction, hell.

How can we help our people see and know the God of Scripture (Job 42:1-6)? How can we protect them, and provide for them the privilege of seeing His greatness and through that, the rest of life with His eyes (Isaiah 6:1-9).

Four steps for reviving a Biblical view of God in our churches, that should be taken on our knees:

1. **Biblical Saturation (Colossians 3:16-17):** The best way to have a Biblical view of God is to read the Bible! We should devote ourselves to the reading of Scripture and encourage our people to be in His Word daily! To move through His Word, Old and New Testaments in a way that delights to learn to love Him more intimately. To know God we must spend significant time in His Word.

2. **Battle False Views:** There are many, and depending on our ministry context, they must be recognized and shown for their shallowness. If our people are interacting with books like, *The Shack*, we must make them aware of the belittling of God that is found there. If they are seeing God as someone who owes them, due to their faithfulness, we must awaken them to the beauty of His salvation, and the glory of grace.

3. **Borrow From History:** We need to take the time to share with our people great books of the past and present that display the glory of God. (Tozer: *Knowledge of the Holy*; Packer: *Knowing God*; Either of Mark Jones new books, *Knowing Christ*; or *God Is*; and many more; Charnock; Sproul; Grudem's *Systematic Theology*; etc.). There is much written on the greatness of God, and it is good to go outside of our generation and regular reading to grow in this, and share with our people. The greatest pursuit we can have is to deepen our knowledge of the Holy One! Always be Word saturated, but also take the time to hear from those throughout history who have had a deep authentic faith with God.

4. **Be Devoted To Expository Preaching:** God's Word is about God, and as church leaders must take the time in our preaching and teaching to faithfully make this kind of biblical preaching a priority. God's Word is a revelation of who He is, what He has done and what He wants from us. Faithful expository preaching will model good hermeneutics, and reveal God's greatness to His people!

People in BC struggle to have a Biblical view of God, and we as TGC-BC churches have a responsibility to be a part of the solution. May God grant us courage, and power as we pursue health for His glory. May we begin to take these steps, and many more that will equip us to know Him, love Him with all we are and have, and live our lives driven and defined by our relationship with Him.

Would love to interact with you on this further:

As you reflect on this, what would you say are the top 10 issues facing churches in British Columbia?

What can you do to fight them in your church, and help other to stay pure and holy?

Is there anything you would add to this to help TGC BC churches have a Biblical view of God?