

### *A Summer of Turmoil ... And of a New Beginning*

Summertime is usually a peaceful time of the year. People enjoy the outdoors, busy themselves in their gardens, travel on vacation, celebrate graduations, and gather at family reunions. When I've sat down to write newsletter articles, I have reported on District and Synodical Conventions in the church, celebrated the Fourth of July, and encouraged people to go to church services, whether at home or while on the road. Yes, summertime is usually a peaceful time of year.

Not this year.

This year, our usual activities are curtailed by the Coronavirus. Cities have become powder kegs of protest. Jobs are in jeopardy. Politics are polarized, and civil discourse has ceased. This year, we face a summer of turmoil.

What now?

Wouldn't it be nice if there was a great big "reset" button that we could push and return everything to "normal"?

But what would that "normal" be? What past reality would we restore? Even if such time travel did exist, we'd never agree on how to use it. It would just become one more point of agitation, one more addition to the turmoil we face today.

We have no choice but to move forward, to work our way through the various crises that have piled upon us. But there is a way you can "reset" your thinking and restore some peace to your mind: go back to the beginning, back to the basics, and begin anew.

*"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1).

Yes, that beginning. It's the beginning we confess in the Creeds, the beginning that recognizes the God who created this universe *and hasn't abandoned it—or us!* In spite of sin, we're still in God's gracious care and keeping (Psalm 145:15, Matthew 6:30), and even though we groan through this life, we know that because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we have God's promise of redemption and life (Romans 8:23). Until then, we can call on the Holy Spirit for help (Romans 8:26), knowing that God will work out everything for our good (Romans 8:28).

Nothing new here, but when we wrestle with the turmoil of this world we tend to fall into the world's ways of thinking. When we do that, we forget who we are and Whose we are. We forget God's promises, and that those old promises are still good and His faithfulness is new every morning.

Each time we return to God's Word and promises, we enjoy a new beginning with Him. That new beginning can also give us a new, fresh look at the problems around us.

Take "racism," for instance. You may know people who refer to Blacks, Asians, or Native Americans as different "races," but the Bible tells us God created one race: human (Genesis 1:27). The Bible also tells us that different ethnic groups have developed since the time of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), but no matter how different we may look we're all still neighbors of one another, and we are all to love our neighbors as ourselves (Leviticus 19:17-18, Luke 10:29-37).

Review the ways of your heart and mind in the light of God's Word, repent of your own sins, renew yourself in God's promises, and rebuild your life according to God's design. In this summer of turmoil, enjoy a new beginning with God each day, and find peace in Him!