

# “A Timely, Timeless Message”

August 14, 2011

**Intro:           \*\*\* VIDEO \*\*\*           “Awake My Soul”**

T/S:   “Tridge” Illustration: a letter; a conference; a sermon...  
          our past, our present, our future...  
          ...as always....

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

## **The Letter:**

Pastor Jeff, a sent-one of Christ Jesus, **by the will of God, *to the saints*** who are at THE BRIDGE and **who are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God** our Father & the Lord Jesus Christ. **3 Blessed be the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,**  
**4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love... - Ephesians 1:1-4 (personalized).**

### Praise the Lord!

I pray these opening words of divine appointment bring to you an inspirational reminder of our defining (faithful saints in-Christ) relationship with the One true God of heaven & earth. **Think about it. God & His Word speak to His people** personally, passionately & powerfully... Better stated, God & His Word speak personally, passionately, & powerfully to YOU.

### Amen & Amen!

BRIDGE family & friends, it is under the inspiration of these verses, representing in part, God’s personal, passionate, and powerful promises to us, His people, that I write to you today. Knowing that the Lord’s hand is upon us, the Trustees & I want to **update you on where the church stands** in regards to our relationship with Kent Island High School & the broader issues surrounding our church’s potential relocation options.

### First things first.

*Where* we are does not define WHO we are. Biblically, “Church” is defined as the set-apart & sent-out saints of Christ Jesus our Lord. Consequently, THE BRIDGE, a body of believers committed to glorifying God by “finding the lost and growing the found,” is a God honoring, New Testament church no matter where we worship. Please don’t ever forget... **It is Who we worship that matters, not the walls within which we worship.**

### Prayer & fasting.

In his book *Experiencing God*, Richard Blackaby correctly points out that God’s will is never “figured out” by His people, but rather, “is revealed” by the Holy Spirit *to* His people. To that end, I ask you to join me, our Trustees, and the larger Ministry Leadership Team, as **we fast & pray together for the Lord’s leading & revealed will.** Remember... “good ideas” are not our goal... God’s will is what we want – no more, no less. *“You will seek Me and find Me, when you seek me with ALL your HEART.” - Jeremiah 29:13*

### We are blessed.

*In Him, each BRIDGE saint has redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace & that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. – Ephesians 1:7-8 (personalized).* What a blessed people we are! And again, not for “where” we worship but **we are blessed by Who & how we worship**. In short, **we are blessed because God Almighty is in our midst!** Moreover, as we continue to seek His face, to make much of Him, and to grow fully devoted “Disciple-Warriors,” He will continue to lead & bless us through every turn, trial & triumph of life.

### God has a plan.

*“And He made known to the BRIDGE-saints the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ... In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to **the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will...**” - Ephesians 1:9,11 (personalized).* If we are honest, most of us would have to admit that while we acknowledge the call & correctness of walking by faith, thereby fully trusting in God's goodness & glory, still there are times we would prefer to walk by sight... thinking to ourselves, “*this would be easier if I could just see where we were going.*” Well... while “easier” might be our preference, “faith-strengthening” is God's goal, as He leads us to grow in our loving, trusting, & total dependence upon Him... Remember, “*...YOU will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on YOU, and YOU will be My witness (locally, regionally, and to the ends of the earth)*” – Acts 1:8.

### Revealed thus far.

**“Get ‘em ready! Get ‘em ready! Get ‘em ready!”** **These are the words of the Lord.** Since late 2008 & early 2009, with tremendous clarity & consistency, I have heard the Lord speak these words into my heart on behalf of our BRIDGE family, over and over again. *Get ‘em ready!* As a result, in faithful obedience our church has been (and continues to be) on mission & ministerially-immersed in prioritizing personal, passionate, & powerful spiritual development. In short, **we are sold out & fully devoted to the biblical mandate of building disciples of Jesus, THE Christ.** Anything less, while capable of building a “religious crowd” is simply not *biblical Church*. Consequently, every aspect of **our ministry aims for Christ-like change** – be it “*death to life*” (a.k.a. *Justification*) or “*saved to slave*” (a.k.a. *Sanctification*). What is important to note is that our biblical mission will never change... and God can & does grow His people in all types of environments – Amen!

### Here & now.

With that said, as most of you know, July marked the first month of our new usage-rates at Kent Island High School. In short, our rental charges doubled when the “*non-profit discount*” of 50% was eliminated from the School Board's rate structure. While this is a difficult reality to deal with, God is leading us on this journey and **He will provide for His people... most likely, thru His people.** That said, as we collectively pray through our options, each BRIDGE family member is asked to go to the Lord, asking for personal guidance and direction. Ask God where and how your unique puzzle piece fits into His grand “puzzle” of life... Ask Him to reveal your custom fit & role within THE BRIDGE.

### Biblical stewardship:

Time, Talents, & Treasures... *where* and to *what degree* are we **investing our lives into the body of Christ?** Are we sowing our time into the fabric of the church, are we offering God complete creative license with the talents with which He has gifted us? What about our “treasures,” are we both sacrificial & joyful givers? **Are God's priorities for our time, talents, & treasures truly our priorities?** This is a rubber meets the road question... because most professing Christians would be quick to acknowledge their desire to

“belong” to a great church. Many would even embrace the call to “BE the church.” But the personally definitive question is, “**Will I demonstrate my commitment to “belong to” & “be” the church by sacrificially & joyfully committing to help BUILD God’s church with my time, talent, & treasure?**” Remember... *For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*— Ephesians 2:10

### Talking to Trustees:

- Beginning this month, our Trustees will be available to you at the church office, on the last Monday night of every other month (ie. August, October...)
- Trustees will be prepared to review & discuss any budgetary questions you have
- Trustees will be prepared to update & address any & all “facilities” questions
- Trustees are servant leaders called & committed to loving, leading, & helping ;-)

### God’s in charge.

Here is an update intended to keep you informed and focused as you pray for the Lord’s revealed will for our church. To be clear, to date, the Lord has not revealed any specific plan to relocate us. That is not to say that we have been passively inactive. Instead, we continue to follow the Lord’s leading by looking into every known option and bringing each possibility into an intentional time of prayer and fasting. To that end, in the last 3 months, a number of locations, conversations and considerations (see the list below) have been prayerfully investigated, none of which, thus far, have met with God’s affirmation.

- Staying at the High School without any change.
- Staying at the High School while cutting back on our hours per Sunday
- Investigations that have not proven providential thus far:
  - Industrial condo purchase within Kent Island Industrial Park
  - Rental of empty retail outlets at old (blue) outlets at Kent Narrows
  - Rental of empty retail store fronts (old Blockbuster, old Happy Harry’s, old Safeway – which wants **\$40,000 per MONTH**... and many, if not all remaining empty retail stores on Kent Island)
  - Rental of two empty boat storage facilities in Grasonville
  - Rental of old, empty Maryland Primary Care bldg. in Stevensville
  - Rental of Seventh Day Adventist church (not used on Sunday’s)
  - Rental of various business buildings currently for sale in the area
  - Rental of the Grasonville Community Center (unavailable Sundays)
- If you have any thoughts, insights, or information that might add to our prayerful considerations, we want to hear from you!

### Moving forward.

These are dynamic times... for our church, our community, our country, and the ever-blending global-culture. Make no mistake. We live in a world on the brink. Think about it. We live in a world with international banks in trouble, shrinking global economies, wars waging, people hurting, hope fading, sin spreading, and... praise God... **CHRIST COMING!** Please take the time to read Matthew 24 as soon as possible. With all that is going on around us, and around the world today, we have got to prioritize the spiritual development of people... We are living in the end times! To put it in God’s words, “Go and **MAKE DISCIPLES... TEACHING THEM TO OBEY EVERYTHING I COMMANDED** you...”

Knowing that we are living in the end times, I leave you with some heartfelt, personal, passionate, & powerful words of truth, love... and I pray... inspiration.

- **“BRIDGE family... seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you”** - Matthew 6:33 (*personalized*).
- **BRIDGE family & friends**, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us amongst the BRIDGE family & friends also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of His great love for each & every one of us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. – Ephesians 2:1-5 (*personalized*).
- **“The BRIDGE family** devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the BRIDGE believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, the BRIDGE family & friends gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. The BRIDGE brothers & sisters broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad & sincere hearts, praising God & enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. – Acts 2:42-47 (*personalized*).
- **“Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose trust IS the Lord.”** – Jeremiah 17:7

Getting ready!

In Him,  
Pastor Jeff

**\*\*\* VIDEO \*\*\* “MISSIONAL CHURCH”**

### **The Conference:**

**PAT LENCIONEY** (Christian Corporate Consultant)

We need to be vulnerable... transparent, trustworthy, open... being REAL!

**VULNERABILITY IS A PAINFUL CALLING WITH A LONG TERM BLESSING!**

### **HUMILITUS**

Humility makes sense... common sense! Why?

**What we don’t know & can’t do... far out weighs what we can know/do!**

Humility is beautiful. See Philippians 2:3-8

Humility is compelling... you grow in your humble places.

Humility is persuasive... we trust the humble who have our best interest at heart.

Humility is inspiring... just look to Christ & the cross for validation.

**\* The CRUCIFORM LIFE is Christ-like and Cross-centered.**

## **DR. HENRY CLOUD...**

The “diagnostic question:” **What does a person do when the truth comes?**

What do you do with people who are allergic to the truth?

### **3 kinds of people... Wise, Fools, Evil.**

- Speak to the wise... they love the light & adapt to it.
- Stop speaking to the fool... they fight the light & seek to adapt it to them
  - o What do you do with people who are allergic to the truth?
  - o **SOME PEOPLE HAVE AN “ALERGY TO REALITY”**
- Reject them after one warning because they are seeking to do damage.

## **SETH GODIN – (Poke The Box)**

- the world is dying in tandem for a lack of distinction...
- Change & ability to make a difference is fueled by PASSION
- ILLUSTRATION...
  - o Raise your hand as high as you can...
    - NOW.... RAISE IT 3” HIGHER...
      - What’s that all about...
        - o ANSWER: we are programmed to do the least necessary...  
SELDOM OUR BEST!
          - When this changes, we will change...
            - When we change... we can have an impact on others/the world!
    - o Revolutions destroy the perfect & enable the impossible!
      - The BRIDGE/ARK will destroy the perfectly inept & create the impossibly passionate...
  - We COMPEL ALL.... BUT... We only APPEALS to FEW
  - Don’t try to be all things to all people...
  - Our ministry, biblically speaking, is “to ALL... but FOR the ELECT”

## **HARD CALLINGS: (TADESSA, MOMA MAGGIE, JEREMIAH)**

**WESS STAFFORD** - (President, Compassion International)

### **Pastor Tadessa of Southern Ethiopia**

- Preached everywhere, even though illegal...
- Preached in prison after being arrested and continuously tortured...
- Eventually told he would be killed publically as an example...
- Town center make-shift electric-rope death...
  - o Hit the switch... all town black out... back to prison till tomorrow
  - o Hit the switch the next day... same thing happened
    - Captures said; "Get out of here!" and set him free
- Pres. of Compassion Int. talked with him only hours later...
  - o Tadessa went right back to a funeral to preach the gospel!
    - Tadessa said he prays for us...
      - "We recognize or need for Jesus
      - I am told the U.S. walk by churches and neglect God
      - We only have one Bible per village... you have many..
      - We rip up the Bible after giving people their part to memorize... when I preach, I ask "WHO is \_\_\_\_\_?"
      - I have been told that people in your country go all day without reading one of their many Bibles... some even go an entire week???? How can this be???
      - We risk our lives to fellowship... we recognize our need for each other...
      - I am told many Christians would rather go on a "picnic" than worship God in the body of Christ???
      - o So it is today...
        - As we come to the Jordan, too many want to stop and stay there for what they think will be an eternal picnic...
        - We have come to the Jordan... to cross the Jordan and get over into the promise land!
          - We will have to fight when we get there...
          - But better to fight in the promise land than die by the river!
            - o People of the Promise?
            - o People of the picnic?

ie. Charlie Bethmann

**MOMMA MAGGIE** - (Egyptian ministry to utter poverty)

"A church is planted in the heart of every saved child."

When we see ourselves in their faces we will become comfortable by their sides.

## **Jeremiah’s “hard calling”**

### **- Jeremiah 1... vv.4-10; 16-19**

*The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” 6 “Ah, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.” 7 But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a child.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD. 9 Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “Now, I have put my words in your mouth. 10 See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”*

*16 I will pronounce my judgments on my people because of their wickedness in forsaking me... and in worshipping what their hands have made. 17 “Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. 18 Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. 19 They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.*

### **- Jeremiah’s ministry summarized in Lamentations 3**

- *Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 I say to myself, “The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.” – Lamentations 3:22-24*

**\*\*\* VIDEO \*\*\* “WHAT PART OF THE GOSPEL IS OPTIONAL?”**

## **CORY BOOKER** – (Mayor of Newark)

- Stand up for what you believe in!
- **Qt: Abe Lincoln** = “Everyone is born an original... but sadly, most die as copies.”
  - “Will you grow drunk on the wine of other’s sacrifice & service?”
  - Stop tolerating failure, mediocrity, & SIN
  - Do something!
  - Do YOUR part!!!
- Be willing to be missional...
  - You can’t change the game from the sidelines!
- Be contextualized... live it out from the inside of you & the inside of your mission field

## BRENDA SALTER-McNEIL - Acts 1:8...

- 1 Pray for a mandate...
- 2 Look for your catalytic event...
- 3 Break-out... Go! BE!!!
  - \* Understanding Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, & the ALL the world
    - Jerusalem – local and like you...
    - Judea – close by and similar but slightly different... no big deals of difference
    - Samaria – close by and totally at odds with your flesh...
    - All the earth – the call to Christ-likeness in loving & serving the unknown...

## STEVEN FURTICK – (“Audacious Faith”)

- Psalms 100:4 = Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving...
  - o Christian proto-call is thus... “Thank you” before “Please”
- Is your faith strong enough to let you rest in your weakness & His strength
- **Elisha’s faith & God’s deliverance (2 Kings 3:9-20)**

So the king of Israel set out with the king of Judah and the king of Edom. After a roundabout march of seven days, the army had no more water for themselves or for the animals with them. **10 “What!”** exclaimed the king of Israel. “Has the LORD called us three kings together only to hand us over to Moab?” **11** But Jehoshaphat asked, “Is there no prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of the LORD through him?” An officer of the king of Israel answered, “Elisha... is here. He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah.” **12** Jehoshaphat said, “The word of the LORD is with him.” So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. **13 Elisha said to the king of Israel, “What do we have to do with each other? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother.”** “No,” the king of Israel answered, “because it was the LORD who called us three kings together to hand us over to Moab.”

**14** Elisha said, “As surely as the LORD Almighty lives, whom I serve, if I did not have respect for the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you or even notice you.

**15** But ***now bring me a harpist.***” ***While the harpist was playing,*** the hand of the LORD came upon Elisha

**16** and he said, “**This is what the LORD says: *Make this valley full of ditches.***

How do you feel about digging ditches? How do you feel about YOU digging ditches?

What are you using to dig your ditch(s)?

Baby spoon, plastic spoon, ice-cream scooper, pooper scooper, ladle, small shovel, larger shovel... industrial back-ho...

Your approach to ditch digging, ditch digging commitments, & ditch digging investments

\*\*\* MICHELLE RHEE – (Waiting for Superman – D.C. Schools Chancellor)  
Your personal involvement/investment to the problem is in direct proportion to your sense of urgency & impact on your priorities...

Million dollar question is... How do you see the drought/sin... and what kind of ditch are you, therefore, digging?

Ditches can be ruts...

Ditches can be water basins... (faithful obedience)

Ditches can be foxholes... (offensive & defensive in war)

Ditches can be graves... (some going up, some going down!)

For God's faithful children... ditches are divine distribution centers!

**17** For ***this is what the LORD says:*** You will see neither wind nor rain, yet this valley will be filled with water, and you, your cattle and your other animals will drink.

**18** ***This is an easy thing in the eyes of the LORD;*** he will also hand Moab over to you. **19** You will overthrow every fortified city and every major town. You will cut down every good tree, stop up all the springs, and ruin every good field with stones.”

**20** ***The next morning..... there it was—water flowing*** from the direction of Edom! And the land was filled with water.

Only God can bring the rain!!!

And only YOU can dig YOUR ditches...