

# GOD'S HANDS

BY PASTOR BOB REID

## OR OURS?



Crystal-ball gazers are polishing their spheres vigorously as the New Year approaches. This past year has left many individuals with an impending sense of doom, especially for those who have chosen to mesmerize themselves with the transmitted gloom of the 24/7 newscasts, Internet web sites, and blogs that operate to share common ignorances and mutual fears.

Undeniably these are challenging times in which to live, and there are many uncertainties. The world faces a major worldwide financial decline. Leadership in world governments is radically changing. Wars continue to grab the headlines, and many other wars rage. The planet continues to be abused by humanity with little consideration of the consequences. Injustices flourish, and people's inhumanity to others exceeds our capacity at times to even process such atrocities.

Even closer to home the challenges seem massive. People fret about retirement while others wish they still had a job from which to retire. The status of our health seizes our attention as the result of a troubling prognosis. We discover that "Family Feud" is more than a TV game show; it is a reality in the lives of people we deeply love. People shattered by the death of loved ones cannot comprehend how they can live with such loss. Such challenges cause many to lower their eyes to the ground and, with stooped shoulders, just try to endure. To people overwhelmed with massive perplexities, the future is just another chapter in a continuing saga of painful existence. A New Year is not too exciting to them unless they get a "do-over" for the past year.

Thomas E. Dewey, a politician who unsuccessfully ran for the presidency several times, said on one occasion, "We need not be afraid of the future, for the future will be in our own hands." If our future, however, depended only

upon human hands and solutions, I'd be concerned. History is filled with examples of how people's feeble hands are incapable of resolving the problems of the world. Thankfully, what we face in the future is not left alone to our own hands—or for that matter to politicians.

Someone has written, "I said to the man who stood at the gate of the years, 'Give me a light that I may safely tread into the unknown.' And he replied, 'Go into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be unto you better than light and safer than any known way.'" This is solid advice for all entering the New Year, whether burdened by the challenging times or not. "Put your hand into the hand of God." All years are challenging. It is just the degree of challenge that differs from year to year. The constant as we face a new year is a God who has promised, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we may say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

Prior to leaving his disciples who would live in an uncertain world, Jesus declared to them hope and comfort. He said, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Later he said, "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). The one who stilled storms, walked on water, healed the sick, raised the dead, turned water to wine, fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes, defeated demons, and who himself was raised from the dead, is the one who is with those who have trusted in Him. His is the hand into which I want to put my own as I face a new year. We faced challenges last year and will face them this year. But we do not have to face them alone and without the greatest resource of all: Jesus Christ.

Years ago a number of musicians, Elvis Presley among others, recorded a song entitled, "Put Your Hand in the Hand." The words they sang were: "Put your hand in the hand of the man who stilled the water. Put your hand in the hand of the man who calmed the sea...Put your hand in the hand of the man from Galilee." That's good advice for the New Year. Especially when you realize that the "man from Galilee" is Jesus Christ, who loved this troublesome world so much he was willing to die for us so we could be forgiven of our sins. Jesus has done and has promised to do wonderful things for those who trust him and commit their lives to him. Why not put your hand in the hand of the man from Galilee?