**Ministering in the Twilight Zone During a Pandemic**

**From George Bullard**

As we begin the year 2021, it is certainly the hope of many in Christian ministry that we can leave the pandemic of 2020 behind us. While that may be possible by the end of 2021, we enter 2021 in a twilight zone between a raging pandemic and a post-pandemic season not knowing for sure what the future will look like but seeking God’s Glory and Goodness as the One who holds the future.

From 1959 through 1964 a television series known as *The Twilight Zone* played with our understanding of reality and fantasy. I am old enough to have watched the original series as I traveled from the fourth through the tenth grades of school.

A synopsis of a twilight zone was written by a Bryan Ells as follows: “*The Twilight Zone* is a place that exists at any moment of time, of space or of mind . . . but always when you least expect it. When you find yourself in this realm of unlimited possibility, be careful what you say or do. The right decisions may help you find your way back out . . . sometimes with greater happiness and wealth. The wrong decisions often lead to madness and death, or an eternity trapped in this dimension. Tread warily past the signpost ahead that says you've entered, *The Twilight Zone*.”

The concept of a twilight zone speaks to our current situation as we travel through life and ministry between reality and fantasy – an ethical zone between right and wrong and good and evil. An in-between time which is without a consistent understanding of what is normal.

We want our fantasy of a quickly disappearing pandemic and a return to normalcy to be true. We want herd immunity – whether that is achieved organically or by vaccination – to be the reality. But it is elusive as COVID-19 infections spread more broadly and people we know are infected, some are dying, and many have discovered they have lingering health issues from the coronavirus that will impact them the remainder of their earthly lives.

We want to know with assurance what is the right thing to do about how our church and its ministry should operate. We want to know what other Christian ministers and churches are doing that is working for them. We want to know what the new normal will be like. We want the pandemic to disappear so the ministry to which God has called us can be carried out with great joy.

Reality or fantasy? Or a twilight zone?

As spiritual leaders of God’s people during a twilight zone we want assurance and clarity of direction from God. We are like Moses in Exodus 33:12-23. In The Message interpretation Moses says, “If I am so special to you, let me in on your plans.” Then declares, “Please, Let me see your Glory.” And God responds that Moses can see His Glory and Goodness as it passes right in front of him, but Moses cannot see his face.

We can discern the will of God for each of our ministries as we experience God’s Glory and Goodness. I hope and pray you are continually discerning and practicing what you experience as God’s will for your ministry setting during this twilight zone.

At the same time, knowing the full mystery of God remains elusive as God hides us in the cleft of the rock and covers us with his hand as he passes by (Exodus 33:22). May that be enough for each of us as we continue to trust in our God who walks beside us and goes before us to an eternity beyond a pandemic.