

[Gospel Tract Society Abandons Pre-Trib Heritage](#)



By [Nathan Jones](#)

From its humble beginnings in 1926, with only a stall within the family barn and a \$100 donation, Lester L. Buttram founded the Gospel Tract Society. God put on his heart a very clear instruction — "Print My Word."

For over 80 years, Lester Buttram and his family have spread the Good News of Jesus Christ through their free tracts, never promoting a particular denomination or church doctrine. Only the Lord knows how many thousands of people over the decades have come to accept Jesus as Savior from the hard work of this faithful ministry.

The Gospel Tract Society has historically taught through their tracts that "prior to The Great Tribulation and the onset of the Antichrist, (the one that the prophet Daniel spoke of as the fourth beast in chapter 7), the Church would be removed from this earth in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye in something called in these latter days as the Rapture or in Biblical times as the Blessed Hope."

This view, called the Pre-Tribulation Rapture, teaches that Christians can find encouragement and hope that Jesus will return and take up to be with Him those who have accepted Him as Savior. This happens before He pours out his wrath upon the world for its continued rebellion against God during a distinct seven year time period known as the Tribulation.

A Drastic Refocus

The Gospel Tract Society has changed their longstanding view in the last month. Lamb & Lion Ministries was first alerted to the change when the ministry's successor, Tom Buttram, asked founder Dr. David Reagan to change the wording in his tract "Living for Christ in the End Times" (based on [the article](#)) from "Rapture" to "Second Coming." The second alert came when a friend of Lamb & Lion Ministries contacted the Gospel Tract Society for copies of that tract, only to be told the remaining 6,000 in inventory were going to be destroyed.

Upon inquiry as to why the Gospel Tract Society would desire to change the wording and destroy the existing inventory, Tom Buttram responded with a very startling revelation. "As

though someone reprinted my Bible overnight," Tom Buttram now believes humanity has already entered into the Tribulation and the Church will not be raptured until the Seventh Trumpet Judgment has sounded mid-way through the Tribulation. He tells of his overnight revelation:

"I was similarly disturbed when I realized that the coming of the Man of Lawlessness is nearer than we think and deep into that study, I found Daniel telling in Chapter 7:24-28, the order of events, then Paul also in [II Thess. 2:3](#),... but I believe Daniel's 'time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time' has begun today. I believe we will be 'delivered,' but not removed from that time until the final Trump... I am now preparing for the Greatest Delusion of all times."

The Gospel Tract Society's new website at [The Coming Christ](#) further explains in point three under "Where We Are" their dramatic shift in emphasis:

"Most importantly, we have made a major shift in one core belief that the Church of Jesus Christ would be miraculously taken out of this world before The Great Tribulation was initiated and until it was completed (a 7yr. Period.) This is referred to as a pre-Tribulation Rapture. Today, we believe that when the Rapture of the Church takes place, it won't be until well into the first 3 & 1/2 years. We as Dispensationists... are having to sort out what our role in the world is now and in the time to come."

And so, after over 80 years of the Gospel Tract Society proclaiming the imminent return of Jesus Christ, they will now refocus their attention on printing materials "needed for all to escape delusion and attack" by the Man of Lawlessness (the Antichrist) and a Mid-Tribulation rescue by Jesus.

An Evaluation

An alarming statement is posted on The Coming Christ website — "We don't have all the answers yet and that can be a source of calm to you, as so many others seemed to have it all figured out."

OK, the esteemed Gospel Tract Society after 80 years of preaching the Rapture of believers before world judgment has just declared that they got it all wrong, that we are actually living in the Tribulation, and that we will all be attacked (means "massacred," folks) by the

coming world leader — and that is supposed to be a source of calm!?! Just how much "calm" are they now going to spread with their newest batch of tracts?

While the Gospel Tract Society is still very amicable with Lamb & Lion Ministries, even offering to give the 6,000 "Living for Christ in the End Times" tracts to the ministry rather than destroying them, I have to in all good Christian brotherhood state that their sudden refocus is not founded in reality.

Take this editors note by Dr. David Reagan from the September/October 2009 edition of the [Lamplighter magazine](#) under the article "The Judgments of the Tribulation."

"I often received calls, even from pastors, asking if we are currently in the Tribulation. Such calls reflect a great ignorance of Bible prophecy because the book of Revelation makes it clear that the seven year period called the Tribulation will be a time of unparalleled horror on planet earth. For example, one half of humanity will die during the first three and a half years! Once the Tribulation begins, no one will have to call anyone and ask if we are in the Tribulation."

How bad will the first half of the Tribulation be? Look at what Jack Van Impe in that article also says occurs during the first half of the Tribulation, the part Tom Buttram says we are now living in.

Seal Judgments 1-4 of 7:

1. The world's greatest dictator ([Rev. 6:1-2](#))
2. The world's greatest war ([Rev. 6:3-4](#))
3. The world's greatest famine ([Rev. 6:5-6](#))
4. The world's greatest death blow ([Rev. 6:7-8](#))

Trumpet Judgments 1-7 of 7:

1. The world's greatest fire ([Rev. 8:7](#))
2. The world's greatest oceanic disturbance ([Rev. 8:8-9](#))
3. The world's greatest pollution of water ([Rev. 8:10-11](#))
4. The world's greatest darkness ([Rev. 8:12-13](#))
5. The world's greatest pestilential invasion ([Rev. 9:1-6](#))
6. The world's greatest army ([Rev. 9:16](#))
7. The world's greatest storm ([Rev. 11:19](#))

I'm looking out my window now and am just not seeing this level of destruction. Sure, fires are raging through Greece and California. Christians are facing increasing persecution, especially in India and Pakistan. Nuclear bombs are coming in and out of hiding in the Arctic Circle. The swine flu is getting a lot of hullabaloo.

But, the worst thing in many American minds is that their 401k is down, or that they are on unemployment, or that Obama is forcing healthcare down our throats. It's certainly worse elsewhere, but really! Can today be really worse than the times of World War II or the Black Death? Can we actually say that today is full of, as Jesus stated in [Matthew 24:21](#) *"great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now — and never to be equaled again"*?

No world leader is currently trying to conquer the world. No peace covenant with Israel exists. No global famine is starving the world population. No demonic hordes are ravishing the populace.

And, if there was all that going on, what Christian could be "set apart" to survive that? What Christian would be particularly protected to survive the Tribulation when Revelation 7 says *"a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language... have come out of the Great Tribulation"*. The bodies of the martyrs will be stacked as high as the world population's will from all that dying from starvation and battle. In comparison, people in the Tribulation will look on today as "the good old days."

The first half of the Tribulation will be anything but peaceful.

Reasons Why

What would cause the Gospel Tract Society and other intelligent, searching believers to give up hope that Jesus will fulfill His promises to rescue the Church from His own wrath ([1 Thes. 1:10](#); [5:9](#); [Rom. 5:9](#); [Eph. 5:6](#); [Col. 3:4](#); [Rev. 3:10](#))?

I believe the answer is two-fold. For one, as The Coming Christ website says:

"Today, the approach of difficult times along with signs and wonders has left most everyone (Christian and non-Christian) with the innate knowing—that something very important is about to happen. It seems that we all know that something has to give—the

weather, our magnetic fields, even the heavens seem to be in flux. Spiritually, the world is falling apart and it seems that something bigger than us is approaching."

Even those who couldn't possibly quote [John 3:16](#) know that statement is true. The world feels something big is around the next corner. Secular movies like "Knowing" and "2012" and books and commentaries and pundits (and the list goes on) are very interested in End Time speculation. Only the overall Church seems to be sleeping on this subject. But, for those believers who are anticipating Christ's return, a certain hysteria has begun to set in. The people are getting very antsy and have begun chasing after every new theory and speculation that rises to the scene.

Secondly, as Dr. Ron Rhodes once said, we are filtering God's Word through our human antennae and our fallen nature is putting static in our reception.

Every person believes God is giving them a particular revelation or insight into the Bible that is different than what they once believed — but they all conflict! I get hundreds of emails a week from people all over the world, and many writers purport to have discovered some special insight from God. For example, could the Pope, Javier Solana, Prince Hassan, Tony Blair, Barack Obama, the Mahdi and the entire United States of America all be the Antichrist at the same time? Saved believers in Christ each have a candidate God has "revealed" to them in Scripture. Or, could the Tribulation be seven years long, World War II, the Papal years, only for Israel, for the entire world, and it's just the conflict in our hearts all at same time? Saved believers each have a position. But, only one answer can possibly be correct.

To use an 80's term, we all need to "take a chill pill." Let us not abandon God's promises to rescue the Church from His coming wrath. Let us not assume some hardship means the Tribulation has begun. Instead, let us trust in God and stay the course, proclaiming the soon return of Jesus Christ and His life-saving work to as many people as we can as quickly as we can in the time we have left on this Earth before the Rapture and then the Tribulation begins.