

## A Message of Hope to Colleagues around the World in GPENreformation

### *You are loved. You are not alone.*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Warm greetings from Shanghai!

The year 2020 has been most unusual. I doubt that any of us would have imagined the challenges we are facing. The number of changes to our lives and livelihoods is mind-boggling. In many cases, what was certain is now uncertain. It is difficult to predict what will happen in the near future, let alone a year from now.



The Greek philosopher Heraclitus is credited with the wisdom, “**You cannot step into the same river twice.**” While the river may look the same, the water and river itself has been changed. We might seldom recognize the daily, constant changes that encompass our lives. In contrast to 2020... How shocking it has been to see an invisible virus turn our world upside down and damage so many lives. It’s obvious that so much has changed.

People in English-speaking countries have been using the term, “the new normal” to refer to the emerging reality of coping with COVID-19 and its impact. As humans, we desire to make sense of life. We want security in the midst of unforeseen changes. We want to understand and find comfort in “normal.”

Whether the world is predictably changing in seasons and cycles or is upended by a pandemic, we can firmly grasp and trust in the words from **Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”** Praise God that He is unchanging. His love for us is perfect and complete. Our hope is not in a 2019 “normal” or a “new normal,” but in Jesus Christ. While we can’t step into the same river twice or go back to a pre-COVID-19 world, we can be reassured that our Lord is never-changing and his perfect love endures forever.

St. Paul shares his confidence in **Romans 8:38-39, “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** We can add to this list, neither school closures nor home-based learning... neither quarantine living nor life as usual...neither health nor illness...neither unemployment nor work as usual will separate us from the love of our God!

Whether today unfolds as expected or a crisis emerges, please find hope and joy in the fact that you cannot be separated from the love of Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday and today and forever.

You are loved. You are not alone. This is most certainly true!

More than ever, I am grateful for your partnership in the Gospel,

Karin Semler  
GPENreformation Council member from Asia



Karin Semler

