

**Reporting on Grace Amidst Horror: Excerpts from Philip Yancey's new book,
What Good is God?
Coming in October from FaithWords/Hachette Book Group**

Mumbai - speaking on the night of the terrorist attacks

What transpired in downtown Mumbai is a vivid picture of a world that does not operate by the rule of grace. Into this world Jesus spoke a radically different message. In a world divided by race, culture, class, language, and religion, Jesus set loose the most powerful force in the universe, the force of grace. That counterforce brings a new message of hope to a world marked by violence and division. I know no better laboratory for grace to get tested than here in India, the most volatile mixture of caste, language, race, and religion on earth.

Blacksburg, Virginia - speaking to survivors of the Virginia Tech campus shooting

What happened in Blacksburg on April 16, 2007 demonstrates beyond all doubt that your life—the decisions you make, what you believe, the kind of person you are—matters *now*. Samuel Johnson said, “when a man is about to be hanged, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.” I must tell you that when you’re strapped to a body board after a serious accident, that also concentrates the mind. When you survive a massacre, it concentrates the mind. As I lay there, , during those seven hours I did not think about how many books I had sold, or what kind of car I drove or how much money I had in my bank account. All that mattered boiled down to a few basic questions. Who do I love? What have I done with my life? Am I ready for what’s next? Ever since that day I’ve tried to live with those questions more at the forefront.

China - meeting leaders of the underground church

China has shown the world the incalculable human cost of a morality untethered to absolutes, arbitrated by a cadre of flawed leaders, and enforced by a gang of radicals. With a different approach centered on Christian qualities of love, justice, and compassion, new revolutionaries are seeking to change society from the bottom up.

South Africa - speaking at a multi-racial megachurch

Some people are pessimistic about South Africa’s future. I am not. I have hope because of the growth in grace I have seen in my three visits. Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu would be the first to admit that the change South Africa needs cannot be legislated by government. It will need the concerted effort of all of you who accept Jesus’ call to find your lives by giving them away, in the process scattering seeds. That’s how the kingdom of God advances: seed by seed.

Chicago - speaking to a meeting of recovery group leaders

In my experience, few churches achieve the kind of contrition practiced by addiction groups. Addicts have helped me understand some of the deepest mysteries of the Christian life. I believe you have much to teach us about what the church can and should be. I find it sadly ironic that some of the most spiritual addicts I know avoid church because they view it as a place for people who already have it together.

I yearn for a grace-abounding church that rewards rather than punishes honesty, and that according to Jesus exists for the sinners and not the righteous, the sick and not the healthy. We are all sick, we are all unwell, and your twelve step groups make acknowledgement of that fact a prerequisite of membership.