

"Do not allow your environment to destroy what the Master has been making out of you."



Do We Look for Another?

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matthew 11:1-3).



The dazzling sculptures begin as a roughly hewn twelve-foot block of snow and ice at the Breckenridge Snow Sculpture Invitational. However, these simple slabs are the starting point of what the artists intend to unearth. Teams of sculptors begin their skilled efforts with instruments that look as though they could have been gathered from a medieval torture museum: pickaxes, handheld barbed

wire, and a two-person saw. For most, it would be a worthless attempt; but to those adequately trained, there is potential for exposing greatness. After tirelessly working for an extended portion of time, blocks are transformed into beauty, and the creations of the artisans stand as glimmering perfection in the sunlight. Now, it is time for the finished sculpture to be paraded before the public for exposure, applause, and judgment. But as all who gather to admire these amazing works of art are aware, regardless of how spectacular these creations may be, every artist's underlying acknowledgment is that a slight change in the environment can turn their prize into a puddle.

From leaping in the womb of Elizabeth to becoming the most authoritative conviction preacher to ever slip on a sandal - John's life was missional and intentional. Christ himself regarded John with such high esteem by stating, "Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt 11:11). However, when his public preaching landed



him in a prison predicament, we catch a glimpse of how the environment can affect even the greatest of men. There seems to be a two-fold purpose in John's instruction to the disciples about questioning Jesus: 1) A reassurance for his own life given to this purpose of a forerunner, and 2) An assurance to the disciples to finally walk away from John and follow Jesus Christ completely. With the scent of his blood soon to permeate the air, John receives the declaration: "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt 11:5).

While there may be no gray walls of prison surrounding you physically, you may be reading this from a personal prison holding hostage your mind, health, or spiritual growth. Allow me to comfort you as those disciples did John that day - Jesus Christ is just as real and powerful today as He has ever been. Do not allow your environment to destroy what the Master has been making out of you.

Do we look for another? No, a thousand times, no!

Johns B. Carson

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GUEST PULPIT: Next Year, in Jerusalem

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DAILYDEVOIIÓNS

Written By Linda Schreckenberg

Note: The opinions on this page are entirely those of the individual and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Indiana Bible College.



Miguel Garrick, New York, NY - Maintaining a consistent devotion with God is extremely important in these crucial times when churches aren't gathering together one hundred percent. Jesus spent time away from His disciples to commune with the Father. In prayer and the Word, we gain wisdom and power to live an overcoming life. For me, it's a retreat, keeping me grounded, calm and at peace throughout the day. We must cultivate a relationship with God through daily prayer and His Word. Falling in love and abiding with Him in that secret place is essential.

I use apps, calendars, and alarms available to set times for the day and the week. Then it becomes a natural flow or rhythm. Morning devotions work best for me, and I also partner with someone in prayer. I use the Tabernacle guide and prayer guides available at www.wnop.org.



Matthew Martin, Dewar, OK - Daily prayer and the Word are as important to the spiritual man as air and nutrition are to the natural man. In my opinion, a Christian can't make it without daily devotion. Jesus said in Matthew 26:41, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation..." Psalm 119:11 says, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee."

I'm an advocate of early morning prayer, and I use the patterns of the Lord's Prayer and a modified Prayer Clock. Those who struggle to pray more than a few minutes don't

really understand the completeness of prayer such as repentance, thankfulness, praising the Lord, praying for personal needs, and intercessory prayer for others. I've heard it said that the best way to make daily prayer a successful part of your life is to just do it. It's a personal thing.



 ${\it Mark\ Lashbrook,\ Algonquin,\ IL}$ - Our greatest enemies, the flesh, the devil, and the world, never take a day off, so daily devotion time is critical.

As humans, inconsistency is the norm. Although it won't necessarily cause one a loss of salvation, it will increase the struggle. "The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17) The two main components that develop faith are the Word of God and prayer.

Often, the "lack of time" issue is a "poor prioritization" issue. We're given twenty-four hours each day, and only what

is scheduled gets done. Nothing is more important than our time with God. Prioritize it, schedule it, and beware of the thief of social media.

I use and teach the pattern of the Lord's Prayer. Making daily prayer a lifelong habit is like determination and discipline in beginning exercising or running. After a while, it becomes second nature, and you can't imagine life without it.



Ron Macey, Houston, TX - Daily devotion is vitally important for Apostolic Christians. The pattern of prayer given by Jesus was, "... give us this day, our daily bread..."

I don't think a Christian can be saved without daily devotion. You can't have faith without hearing the Word of God, and there are so many sources now to get the Word. Scripture speaks of morning and evening sacrifices, but in pastoring, I never know what a day will bring. I just make sure I go back to the Source during that day.

I approach prayer in the pattern the Lord gave us, beginning with repentance and thanksgiving, etc. Then, I go the direction He is leading me. People struggling to pray more than a few minutes aren't focusing and are allowing themselves to be distracted. Also, openness and honesty are best when trying to touch God. Just talk to Him as your heavenly Father.



Jonathan Mains, Sellersburg, IN - Daily devotion is extremely critical to our walk with God, especially in the time we live in. A person may still be saved without it, but it will be extremely difficult when hard times come.

My preference is morning devotions, because Scripture admonishes us to "Seek ye first the Kingdom..." (Matthew 6:33) I've used the Prayer Wheel pattern that breaks prayer time into twelve, five-minute increments,

and a pattern using the word "PRAY" as an acronym: "Praise," "Repentance," "Asking," and "Yes" (claiming what you're praying). People struggle to pray by allowing distractions. And, someone planning a marathon doesn't just go out the next day and run it. There's a process of consistency that takes place to get you to that point. Praying the Word is also powerful in touching God and enhancing your relationship with Him.



Matthew Tuttle, Vidor, TX - Daily communing with God is the air that our soul breathes. According to Scripture, you can't be saved without it.

Be intentional and schedule a set time in your calendar for devotions like you would if you were going to meet with the President. I do both morning and evening devotions. Scripture speaks of seeking Him early: "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee." (Psalm 63:1) Evening is the conclusion of the day.

I pray the Lord's Prayer as an outline and teach on prayer using II Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, which are called by my name..." In verse 15, God said, "Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place." Special attention is given here in Scripture regarding a place. Jesus would go away to a place to pray. I also teach new converts to pray the Word, accomplishing reading and prayer to form a lifelong pattern.



Carl McLaughlin, Euless, TX - If Jesus needed daily bread in the Lord's Prayer, then our weakened humanity needs daily prayer for us to survive. Without daily devotions, our spiritual immune system will be weak, and we won't have the spiritual antibodies necessary to fight off things.

Using blocks of time has freed me from feeling like I'm "on the run" all the time. Six o'clock to eleven-thirty in the morning is focused on my inner life; what I'm becoming.

From twelve-thirty on, I focus on what I'm doing. This is the action part of my time; responding to texts, emails, etc.

Morning devotions are best for me. I've done various prayer patterns, but the one I use most is the "A.C.T.S." model that keeps me from selfish praying. It's an acronym; Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. Notice that the first three are about Him.

Focus on progress, not perfection, in prayer. Give God your negative emotions you're in denial about and allow the Spirit to transform your grains of sand into pearls of holiness. Allow prayer to become a spiritual discipline, a conviction, and not an emotional feeling. Inspiration is emotionally driven. Conviction is value-led.



Written By Jordan Blake



Pastor Bryan Ballestero & Family

In the heart of the growing city of Raleigh, North Carolina, there is a powerful Apostolic church that is growing as well. Rev. Bryan Ballestero is the pastor of the Temple of Pentecost (T.O.P.) in Raleigh, North Carolina, and the Lord is blessing their church greatly with revival. Pastor Ballestero has a wife, Christy, and five children: Huntley, Christyana, Christian, Caison, and Gentson. He became Youth Pastor under the leadership of

Rev. Wayne Huntley in 1993, became Assistant Pastor in 1997, was elected Pastor in 2003, and when Bro. Huntley became Bishop, Pastor Ballestero stepped into the role of Senior Pastor at T.O.P. Along with being Pastor, he also serves as a Presbyter for the North Carolina District UPCI.

Surrounded by Preachers
Pastor Ballestero's ministry has been shaped by his upbringing. Growing up the son of Martyn Ballestero, a church planter and pastor for thirty years, and grandson to two Apostolic pioneers, Carl Ballestero and William R. Starr, he was surrounded by ministry. He recalls that when guest ministers would come by, "Our entertainment was sitting around the living room and hearing the stories of building churches and other life stories of the

early Pentecostals."

At the age of seven years old he began to feel called to ministry. He says that as he got older he wrestled with that call of God on his life. As he says, "I thought, we have over 100" people in our family that are Apostolic preachers and pastors; surely God wants me to be something else." He expresses that he felt like he could not compare to the ministry of his grandfathers and father, but he held onto the fact that God made everyone individually and uses the individual for His purpose.

He says that his grandfathers, Carl Ballestero and William R. Starr, father Martyn Ballestero, and father-in-law Wayne Huntley have been the most influential men in his life. They have shaped who he is and

how he ministers.

He recalls a quite humorous memory of the first time he ever preached. "I was fifteen years old, and I preached at a youth service. I went through everything I had in probably two or three



A Convert is Baptized

minutes. My brother played the drums, and he went out for a minute, but when he came back in, we were already shaking hands." He finished facetiously, "I was one of the favorite preachers for awhile." After high school he went to Jackson College of Ministries and then evangelized for a year before becoming Youth Pastor.

Humble Beginnings

The Temple of Pentecost had quite an interesting beginning. Pastor Ballestero says that in 1978, Rev. Wayne Huntley was doing very well in the evangelistic field, but he always had a burden for North Carolina. Some of Rev. Huntley's friends told him, "If you go there, you will never be heard of again." Nevertheless, he was voted as pastor of a church in Raleigh with five people, not counting his wife and daughter. This church had tried everything to have revival, but it was to no avail. Pastor Ballestero says that they asked Bro. Huntley what he could do to bring them revival, and Bro. Huntley said, "Until every door

in Raleigh has been knocked on, I will not quit."

After one year, the church's highest record attendance was 113 people. After two years, the record attendance was over 300. Pastor Ballestero says, "God led him through home Bible studies... This church basically was built on home Bible studies." Due to one particular home Bible study that Bro. Huntley taught, there were

thirty people that came into the church.

Building the Temple

Shortly after Bro. Huntley started the church in 1978, they began running around 300 people. Pastor Ballestero says that it was so packed in there that the walls would start to sweat, so Bro. Huntley began to pray and ask God to open up an opportunity to buy another property. He attempted to buy the acre of land next to their property, and the owners said they would sell it for \$50,000. Bro. Huntley knew that was a ridiculous asking price, and began to feel very discouraged because

Crowded Altar Filled With Hungry Souls

he could not find property anywhere else. Pastor Ballestero says, "That was pretty discouraging for Bro. Huntley, and that was the only time he really felt like leaving Raleigh." But he describes how the Lord spoke to Bro. Huntley and said, "You can leave if you

want, but I am going to have revival here with you or without you."

Bro. Wayne McClain was Bro. Huntley's pastor, and he prophesied that they would get five acres of land for \$50,000. Shortly after that, the Lord gave this church five acres just one mile from downtown Raleigh for \$50,000. They bought three more acres around it, and they have a beautiful building. It was built to seat 500 people, but with the walls knocked out, it could seat up to 950. Along with that, they have a gym that also houses the student ministry and used to house the Spanish ministry.

Evangelism, Edification, Education

The Temple of Pentecost has many departments and ministries within the church. Pastor Ballestero says for each service they have a specific goal. On Sunday mornings they focus on evangelism, and he describes that their focus is on "new people and evangelizing the lost. We have children's ministry at the same time going on upstairs." On Sunday nights, they focus on edification, and Bro. Ballestero says this is "saving the saved." Lastly, on Wednesdays, they focus on education, and they have separate classes for Hyphen, youth, and children apart from the adult class.



Pastor Bryan Ballestero



Pastor Ballestero Preaching

He continues and says, "One of the ministries that has been very productive lately is what we call the G.A.P. ministry (Going to Another Place), and it is a substance abuse program that we started two years ago. Bro. Wiggins, a man in our church, got a burden for those involved in substance abuse, and got in a program where the state will send us people that are hooked on substances... we will teach them classes on Sunday morning... and then they will come in the sanctuary."

Pastor Ballestero says that in the last two years there have been 250 baptized in Jesus' name and around 230 filled with the Holy

Ghost just out of that one ministry.

Another ministry that Pastor Ballestero highlighted was their "Vessels of Honor" Conference they have every year. This is a three-day conference where they teach the church on inward and outward holiness. They will then conduct signed church membership out of this conference, and members can be involved in the ministries of the church.

Along with those, T.O.P. puts emphasis on children's ministry. A number of years ago they started a program called "Heroes in Training," and once every quarter, they will let the kids from five to eleven years old lead all aspects of the Wednesday night service. They will sing, speak, and play music. He notes that every one of their students in Bible college right now have grown up in Heroes in Training. Pastor Ballestero really believes it has helped to develop them to be ministers. He quotes Genesis 14:14 and says, "The most unified, powerful, and prevailing church is the one where the leadership has been spiritually born, trained, and employed in the home church. As Bro. Huntley has preached,

there is no substitute for sons."

They have many other programs, such as an annual Missions Conference where they raise a sacrificial offering, a vacation Bible school called "Kids College of Bible Knowledge," choir, a prayer chain, family prayer every Saturday, and others. The Lord has truly blessed this church in their efforts.

Current Growth

Pastor Ballestero says that Raleigh is a diverse area and people from all over the world are coming there, so they are constantly having visitors come. He says that they probably have somewhere in the range of two to five conversions every week on average. In the months of September and October 2020 they had over fifty baptisms in Jesus' name. Pastor Ballestero believes that they probably have had somewhere around 200 baptisms and about the same amount of people who have received the Holy Ghost. At this point in time, they are also running at near capacity. They are looking to expand, and Pastor Ballestero says, "We are just believing if it is God's will, it is God's bill."

Investing in Ministers

Time is an issue with which everyone has to deal. Obviously a pastor is going to have a limited amount of time and energy. Pastor Ballestero says that he prioritizes investing in the ministers

> and leaders of his church. He emphasizes being able to trust your leaders, so that they can do more. They hold monthly meetings with their leadership to encourage them and get them united with the vision of the pastor. He says, "I work on them so that they can work on those people in their groups. We reproduce ourselves into the leaders, and the leaders

reproduce that into the rest of the church.

Pastor Ballestero takes a moment to stress that there can only be one vision in the church, being the pastor. He says, "If there is more than one vision, there is division." In these monthly meetings, he restates what their purpose is so that they can minister according to the vision of God through the pastor.

Foundations of Growth

"Revival + Evangelism + Maturity = Growth," says Pastor Ballestero. He continues and says, "We know that God is the One who gives the increase. According to 1 Corinthians 9:22, we are to be 'all things to all men, that we may by all means save some.' So we do not change the doctrine, but we do what we can, and then God will do His part...God will do what we cannot do.

Pastor Ballestero continues to mention that they put special emphasis on certain aspects of the church to make sure it is healthy. He says that their church does not simply want to see people converted, but they want to see them grow personally. He believes it is important to make sure the church is unified, as well as making sure the congregation feels encouraged in their

abilities. To fulfill that, they like to involve the people whenever they can. He continues

and says, "We talented people in our church; many of them are in Bible school. We have done our best to invest they were small children, and we have encouraged them to be a part



Music Team Ushering in God's Presence

of the Kingdom of God." He then notes that they want to make sure that their congregation is using their abilities for the Lord, and not for the world.

One specific thing Pastor Ballestero mentions that will destroy revival is envy. He says, "We have come down hard against envy and jealousy. That has no place in the Kingdom of God." The Temple of Pentecost truly believes that the church must be unified and full of love to multiply according to the will of God, and so they have grown together with the Lord by their side.



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What's Love Got to Do With It?



Chad A. Parker

No doubt, the moment you read the title of this column, Tina Turner began belting in your mind. Having released this song in 1983, it became a career maker for Ms. Turner, and some 38 years later, it still echoes in most of our minds the moment we hear or read that

phrase. Though I will avoid providing a critique on the content of the original lyrics of the song, I do feel that the question posed is relevant in our lives. How? Well, I'm glad you asked.

Very clearly, the Word of God states in 1 John 4, "God is love." So by making a simple adjustment in our understanding of the question, we are now asking, "What's Love (God) got to do with it?" If we were to begin examining our actions, motives, behaviors, choices, etc. by asking that question, then our world would look a little different. Is He my motivation? Is He at the center of my decision making? Is Love my purpose?

Every day, I get to witness Love in action! I watch as individuals from across the country pour themselves into children who would. otherwise, not have a chance. These individuals aren't here because they have nowhere else to go. On the contrary, at this moment, Tupelo Children's Mansion has more degreed professionals on staff, including those with advanced degrees, than at any other time in our history. Our current staff holds degrees in education, social work, business administration, and human services. These individuals had careers, had opportunities, and some had other plans; however, they started asking the question,"What's Love got to do with it? With a willingness of heart and the blessing of spiritual authority, they began pursuing Love. That pursuit led them to 1801 East Main Street in Tupelo, Mississippi.

Most likely, when you spend your life pursuing Love, you won't have the time, the desire, or the means for the things that this world defines as successful. However, I can guarantee that you will never experience more fulfillment, peace, or joy than when you are pursuing Love. This reminds me of the lyrics to another song:

You may seek earthly power and fame, the world might be impressed by your great name, soon the glories of this life will all be past, but only what you do for Christ will last.1

If you feel a desire to pursue Love, consider Tupelo Children's Mansion! We are always accepting applications from those who are called. Email your resume with a letter of interest to ermajudd@mansionkids.org. Want to volunteer or intern at TCM? Email me at chadparker@mansionkids.org. Pursue Love. Share Love. Love works!

^{1.} Only What You Do for Christ Will Last Author: Raymond Rasberry Copyright: © 1963, (renewed) Pronto Music and Simco Music Co., Inc.

5 Steps the Church Must Take for Post-Election Unity

By Clarence L. Haynes, Jr.

1. Recognize God's Sovereignty. "He controls the course of world events; he removes kings and sets up other kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the scholars" (Daniel 2:21). This verse talks about the sovereignty of God. Sovereign simply means that God is in control and has ultimate authority to will and do as He pleases. Another way of thinking about it is that everything happens as God wills it to happen. He uses the course of world events to accomplish His purpose in the earth.

2. Remember the Mission. I am always amazed how we in the church forget what our primary mission is. "He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15). "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Let me sum it up like this: (1) Be salt and light; (2) Preach the gospel; (3) Make disciples; (4) Wait for power from the Holy Spirit so you can do the first

3. Be Humble Enough to Listen. "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1:19). The truth is there are many reasons why a person chose to vote the way they did. Coming to a place of unity means trying to understand someone else's position. If there is going to be unity we must be willing to listen and understand without casting judgment.

4. Realize There Are Other Issues That Matter Too. What I am about to say may be shocking to some of you, but there are many moral issues to deal with in our society. I know abortion and marriage seem to get the most attention, but they are not the only ones. If we are going to be the church and really bring unity, we must recognize that as important as abortion and marriage are there are other issues that are just as important. This doesn't mean we don't fight for abortion or marriage; it means we do that while not neglecting the other issues.

5. Remember to Love Everyone Regardless of Political Views. "He answered, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Luke 10:27). "Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen" (1 John 4:20).

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Gary Dornbach Liberty, MO

Bro. Dornbach, briefly tell us about yourself and your ministry.

I grew up in an Apostolic home since I was seven years old, but I did not feel a clear call from God until I responded to Him during a private school choir tour when I was seventeen. Upon receiving that call, I immediately

spoke with my pastor and began serving in various ministries in the local church. God opened the door for my wife and I to move from Wisconsin to Liberty, Missouri to take over as Lead Pastor of Refuge Church. We have been there, with our three children, since June of 2009.

How can I be certain I have been called by God, and if I have been called, what should I do next?

Every person's calling is different. We see this throughout Scripture. Some were called to build an ark (Noah); leave their country and go to another country (Abraham); one married a king and saved a nation (Esther); one received a call from a burning bush (Moses); and one was struck blind as God spoke about his calling from the heavens (Paul). These were different callings at different seasons of their lives, but each one was called by God at a specific time and place for a specific purpose. Do not question your significance or your call. Trust that God can and will use you.

When God laid a burden on Nehemiah's heart, he immediately began to pray and fast before taking it to anyone else. That is the best place to start. Then he took what he was feeling to the authority in his life at that time (the king), and he received permission to go and accomplish the call to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. After you have prayed and fasted, immediately go to your pastor and make your pastor aware of what you are feeling.

How can I tell if it's really God?

God will never go against His own Word. Does what you are feeling from God align with His Word? If you are feeling to marry an unbeliever, that is not from God because His Word clearly condemns that. If you feel like it is time to save money rather than tithe, that is not the will of God because His Word clearly speaks

otherwise. Make sure what you are feeling from God aligns perfectly with His Word.

Spiritual authority is also a principle throughout the Word of God. Go to your pastor and allow your pastor to pray with you and help you develop what you are feeling from God. Always keep the lines of communication open with your spiritual authority. God's Spirit, His Word, and your pastor are three ways to know what God's will is for your life.

How do I develop my call and what do I do in the meantime?

Focus on your spiritual disciplines. Ministers do not last long-term in any form of ministry if they try to give from an empty well. The altar was the biggest piece of furniture in the Old Testament tabernacle for a reason. Later, when it was time to rebuild the Old Testament temple after the first one laid in ruins, Ezra tells us that they started by first rebuilding the altar. The first thing we must make sure to focus on before anything else is our altar.

After that, do not sit around waiting for a microphone to sing or preach. Jesus said those who would be greatest among us would first be servants. Serve well. Serve often. Serve with consistency. Remember, pastors regularly have people tell them they are called. God does not usually appear to pastors in a burning bush about who is called, just like He usually does not appear to you to call you in that manner. Sometimes, the best ways pastors know who is called is by looking at who is already in the field. David was in the field. Gideon was in the field. Do not ever sit in a church doing nothing. Get involved somewhere, show up early, and do everything you can with the highest level of excellence possible as unto the Lord.

What role does mentorship play in my future ministry plans?

Mentors are key in our ministerial development. In my book, I name and thank a list of people who intentionally made time to invest in me, give me ministerial opportunities, listen to me, correct me, and pray with me. I do not think I would have developed into the man that God has called me to be if it was not for them. Just be careful that your mentors

are not saying something different from God, His Word, and your pastor.

What motivated you to write this book? What's the story behind it?

Being called by God can sometimes be a frustrating process. Yes, you read that right. I say that because no Spirit-filled believer takes a call from God lightly. You have this deep desire to be mightily used by God, especially if you are reading this article. However, the point between our initial call from God and the fulfillment of that call is not overnight. It would be great if God would just have us check an app where we could find out our mission with details about when, how, and where. It is just not the case. If we are going to lead others in a journey of faith, then we certainly need to have firsthand knowledge of what navigating that journey looks like.

I felt called by God at seventeen years of age, but I did not step into a full time pastorate until I was twenty-eight. People would constantly say, "Your gift will make room for itself." This is true, but what should I be doing in the meantime? I wrote a book on this topic because God told me to write down the things I learned on this journey.

Where can readers purchase your book and how much does it cost?

"I Think I Am Called. What Do I Do Now?" can be purchased for \$14 at www. PentecostalPublishing.com.

If readers have questions, can they contact you and if so, how?

If I can help anyone in anyway, I am honored to be of assistance. I can be reached by email at PastorGary@RefugeChurchOnline.com. However, I will say that if you feel a call from God, the first person you need to speak

with (outside of God) is your pastor. If you are married, you also need to make sure your spouse is on board with pursuing a life of ministry. If you have not spoken to your pastor yet, then please do not reach out to me until you have done so.



aposto i Calendar 2021

D. 1. T. E.	EVENE		00514500 / 40750	0007107 / 1050
DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	SPEAKERS / NOTES	CONTACT / INFO
FEB 12-13	Systems & Strategies Conference A conference for pastors, volunteer leaders & staff examining systems & strategies for apostolic churches to help prepare us for the harvest.	Church of Pentecost 8709 Hogan Rd Jacksonville, FL 32216	Speakers for this event will be announced closer to the event date.	VIsit www.churchofpente- cost.org for more infor- mation.
FEB 8-9	Indiana Bible College Book Trip IBC students, staff, and guests travel to Baker Book House in Grand Rapids, MI to shop for books, converse, and fellowship.	2768 E Paris Ave S E Grand Rapids, MI 49546	Many IBC staff members will have the opportunity to address the students.	Visit www.indianabible- college.org for more details.
FEB 25-27	Winterfire Conference 2021 WinterFire is where action is birthed from revelation. Every leadership team will leave renewed and empowered! It is the place where those who pour out every week in ministry are poured into. Be a part of WinterFire 2020 to be challenged, encouraged, and instructed by the Word of God.	The First Cathedral 1151 Blue Hills Avenue Bloomfield, CT 06002	Jerry Jones, J.H. Osborne, Indira Petoskey, Victor Jackson, D.K. Bernard, Josh Carson, Sammy Stewart, Mark Morgan	Visit www.winterfire.org for more information, or call (860) 528-9834.
FEB 25-27	Indiana Bible College CONNECT Designed for high school juniors and seniors who feel a call to ministry. Students will be a part of an in-depth look at what it means to be called into ministry and how Indiana Bible College can help educate, train and instruct those called.	Indiana Bible College 1502 E Sumner Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46227	Many IBC staff members will have the opportunity to address the prospective students.	Visit https://indianabible- college.org/connect/ for more information.
MAR 5-6	Chase Marshall Memorial Bible Quizzing Tournament Bible quizzers gather for a power-packed tournament and fellowship.	Calvary Tabernacle 902 Fletcher Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46203	Speakers for this event will be announced closer to the event date.	Visit www.indianabible- college.org for more details.
MAR 24- 26	Launch Church Planting Solutions The best experts and experienced church planters guide participants in completing a comprehensive plan for a successful apostolic church launch.	Reneassaince Airport Hotel 5445 Forbes Pl Orlando, FL 32812	Speakers for this event will be announced closer to the event date.	Visit www.launchachurch. faith for more details.
MAR 30	Indiana Bible College Pastor's Day Honoring the special role that pastors play in the lives of IBC students. The pastor and spous- es of all students are encouraged to attend classes and chapel service with their students. In the evening they are also invited to partici- pate in the Pastors' Day Banquet.	Indiana Bible College 1502 E Sumner Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46227	Many IBC staff members will have the opportunity to address the prospective students.	Visit www.indianabible-college.org/pastors-day for more information.
APR 6-8	Indiana Bible College Theology Conference The students of the Theology Club host a powerful conference with guest speakers, night sessions, and more.	Indiana Bible College 1502 E Sumner Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46227	Speakers for this conference will be announced closer to the event date.	Visit www.indianabible- college.org for more details.
May 7	Indiana Bible College Commencement Exercises Honoring the graduating class of 2021.	Calvary Tabernacle 902 Fletcher Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46203	The commencement speaker will be announced closer to the event date.	Visit www.indianabible- college.org for more details.
JULY 28-30	North American Youth Congress The world's largest apostolic youth event, filled with dynamic preaching, singing, and fellowship.	Lucas Oil Stadium 500 S Capitol Ave Indianapolis, IN 46225	Speakers for this conference will be announced closer to the event date.	For more information: www.northamericany-outhcongress.com
SEPT 2021	Mid-America Renewal Conference (MARC) Indianapolis, Indiana - A power-packed preaching conference in the heart of the Midwest.	Calvary Tabernacle 902 Fletcher Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46203	Speakers for this conference will be announced closer to the event date.	ibc@apostolic.edu indianabiblecollege.org or call (317) 262-4030 or (317) 514-8069
Ост 5-8	UPCI General Conference 2021 Don't miss this incredible gathering of apostolic ministers and acquaintances worldwide.	Indianapolis, IN	Speakers for this conference will be announced closer to the event date.	Visit www.upcigc.net for more information.

Church Today: Three Levels of Faith



Jason Gallion

Church Today jasongallion@gmail.com

Three Levels of Faith

Jesus was near Jerusalem and expectations were high. It was here at Jerusalem that the Messiah was expected to set up a kingdom and deliver the Jewish people from oppression. Jesus's disciples and followers expected that if Jesus was the Messiah, the literal

establishment of a kingdom was imminent. Yet, that didn't happen. Jesus was rejected as Messiah. Jesus did not then establish the literal kingdom His followers expected. Instead, a new paradigm began to unfold, the church. His church would be built, even after His absence. This was the context of Luke 19, when Jesus shared a parable about the coming church age by speaking of a king, who leaves his country, and entrusts his servants with both money and a mandate to, "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13). This command, I believe reflects both the mission of the church even to this day and the highest expression of our faith.

The word occupy in this text is not passive, as it is sometimes used in English. The word does not mean, "occupy space," as in, "be present, but do nothing." The Greek word translated occupy speaks to an active occupation in work or trade, implying investment, multiplication, and increase. There are multiple levels of faith, but I believe work is the highest level.

Worship is an expression of a level of faith. True worship comes must come from a true place. However, even true worship, though powerful is often momentary. As quickly as worship rises, it can also fall. Worshipping God on Sunday means little when it is not followed by walking with God on Monday. Even worship that appears sincere is not always accepted. Cain worshipped, but his worship was rejected. Worship is the first level of faith that is always meant to lead us to the second level of faith, walking with God.

Enoch walked with God. His consecration was not only for a moment, but also acted out in his lifestyle. Walking with God is reflective of total consecration and submission. This level of faith is necessary, but even this level of faith is not the end. Walking with God is a second level of faith, but it ought to lead us to a third level of faith, which is working for God.

Noah worshipped God, Noah walked with God, and more than that, Noah worked for God. Walking with God ensures our alignment to the King, but it is our work that multiplies what we have been given. Work is a service that flows from our identity as sons and daughters of God. It is work that is the highest level of our faith. When Noah worked, he created the means by which others could enter and be saved. We need worship, we need walking, but we also need working. It takes all three. It is the work that transforms us into ministers and servants. Work is essential to fulfilling the mandate for the church.

The mandate to multiply what has been entrusted to us remains a priority for the church today. We must never be content only to worship and walk, even when it is done corporately. We have a mandate to multiply. We don't know the day or the hour when the King will return, but we must do all we can to multiply what our King has entrusted to us before time runs out.



Bobby Killmon

Theology

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How can I show someone that Calvinism isn't in the Scripture? (Part 3)

This is the last article in a three-part answer to this good question. The Bible teaches the preservation of the saints; not Calvinism's claim of perseverance of the saints. God will preserve

those who are willing, but we can choose to voluntarily return to sin and unbelief. So, there's no "once saved, always saved."

I Tim. 4:16 says to take heed to continue in the doctrine, for it is the means by which Timothy can both save himself and all who hear him. Why warn to continue if one cannot backslide? Paul says in Rom. 11:22 we must continue in goodness or we will be cut off. In I Cor. 15:1-2, Paul says the Corinthian believers were saved, but only if they keep it in mind, or they could believe in vain. In 1 Tim. 5:12, Paul says some widows already have "damnation" because they "cast off their first faith." They had to have true faith to cast it off for damnation. Peter affirms this too when he gives a prescription for never falling (2 Pet. 1:10). Why warn if there's no possibility?

In Mt. 10:22, Jesus warns one must be willing to endure to be saved. In Jn. 10:27-29, Jesus says His sheep hear His voice, and because they first follow Him, no one can pluck them away. Notice, if you are willing to first follow, then Christ says His power to save is on your side. Heb. 7:25 shows that Christ will utterly save those who choose to come unto Him. Again, the stipulation for preservation is our willingness to come. Pointing out Scriptures that demonstrate preservation (God's promise to save those that are willing) is not the same as proving perseverance (God saves and keeps me despite my will to come to Him or continue in faith).

Heb. 6:4-6 lists the following qualities of its addresses: they were enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, were partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasted the Word of God, and tasted the powers of the world to come. That can mean nothing else than they were saved. But then God's Word declares clearly in Heb. 6:6, "If they shall fall away..." This is clearly saved people being warned not to fall away or backslide and become lost. They were in real danger of this, thus the warning in the epistle. God even says through the writer, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you..." (Heb. 6:9). The prescription was issued so they'd not be lost. The hope of the Word was that they'd choose to heed it and remain saved.

The issue with Calvinism in all its points is simply this: I must choose between what Scripture says clearly or Calvinism's teaching. With as much humility and grace as possible, we as Bible believers must side with God and His Word. Should we listen to man's ideas on salvation? To quote the great apostle in Rom. 3:4, "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."



T. W. Massengale

Church Growth tmassengale@apostolic.edu

Three Key Considerations for Making 2021 a Year of Church Growth and Evangelism

1. Focus on target, rather than mass evangelism. You will never

reach everyone. Mass evangelism includes billboards, newspaper, postal mailouts, radio, advertising, and more. They cast a broad net and often catch nothing. 95% of all new converts are the result of being witnessed to by family, friends, acquaintances, or coworkers. This is also known as 'relationship' evangelism. You must win a friend before you can win a soul. So focus on personal witnessing (consider launching the CCC

ministry described in Total Church Growth), home Bible study, and various special services in which church members bring someone they know, witnessed to, or personally invited. Evangelism in the New Testament was uniquely targeted. Jesus specifically reached for the "lost sheep of Israel" (Matt. 15:24); Paul reached out to the Gentiles, and Peter targeted the Jews (Gal. 2:7).

2. Focus on visitors to your church services. This is by far your most fertile harvest field. Most people who visit your services are searching for something from God or they would not have come. So make guest follow-up your number one evangelism method. Few receive the Holy Ghost the first time they come, so you must encourage them to return many times. How? A phone call within 24 hours. A letter within three days. A home visit within seven days. Add them to your church mailing list and invite them to upcoming events

every month or so. Finally, visit them several more times over the coming year. You will glean more converts from your guests than any other method of evangelism.

3. Let your target determine your evangelism method. If you are reaching for the family and friends of church members, host many special events that provide opportunities for your members to invite those they know. If you are striving to encourage church visitors to return, launch a comprehensive guest followup program. If you are looking to expand your Sunday school, start a bus, van or car ministry. If you are wanting home Bible study prospects, look to new converts who have a broad base of unsaved friends (teach a HBS to every new convert and encourage them to invite all they can to the study). If you want your church members to witness more, teach a personal evangelism series on your mid-week Bible study.



Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.

And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.

JOSHUA 14:8-9

WINTERFIRE2021



FEB 25-27 2021

SPEAKERS

Thursday EveningJerry Jones

Friday Morning
J. H. Osborne
Indira Petoskey
Victor Jackson

Friday Evening
D. K. Bernard
Josh Carson

Saturday Morning Sammy Stewart Mark Morgan



















REGISTRATION

Registration for WinterFire 2021 is limited due to anticipated COVID-19 restrictions. Register online at winterfire.org.

LOCATION

1151 Blue Hills Ave. Bloomfield, CT

Visit winterfire.org to learn about the available Winterfire hotel group rates.

CONTACT

Visit the WinterFire website and social media pages for more information.

@winterfireconf
winterfire.org



Spiritual Growth

Are We Ready to Be Judged

for Every Secret Thing?

Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:13 & 14 (NLT), "Hear now is my Carol Clemans final conclusion: Fear God

and obey His commands, for this is everyone's duty. God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing,

whether good or bad.'

We are all born sinners. But because of the blood of Jesus Christ, we can experience a wonderful salvation by obeying Acts 2:38 and have our sins washed away by the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world! Once we are born again of water and Spirit, we must learn to 'grow up unto Him' - Eph.

Our true worship unto the Lord is being holy as He is Holy! How we live our lives is our true worship. As we read in the above scripture, we all will stand before God for every secret thing! If we experience salvation and live holy, we have nothing to fear.

How do we live holy? By allowing the Holy Ghost to work in our heart through the Fruit of the Spirit (Gals. 5) to control our words and actions. If we desire love, joy, and peace, we must be patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and have self-control. How we treat others is how we are treating God!

We must be Holy Ghost controlled 24 hours per day. We cannot blame our past, or other people, or circumstances for how we choose our words and actions. The Bible teaches us to be kind one to another - Eph. 4:32. We are to put off our old sinful nature and put on the Lord Jesus Christ – that means His character. The Holy Ghost does not force us to be holy. It's our choice to follow God even after salvation. We choose to either walk in the flesh or walk in the Spirit in all circumstances.

We must filter all our thoughts through God so our feelings will be godly and then our actions will be God-like. I repeat, in ALL circumstances. I love God because He first loved me. Solomon did not obey his own words of wisdom. In 1 Kings 11, it is recorded that Solomon turned his heart to the false gods of his 1,000 women even after God warned him. Every human will stand before God in God's timing.

www.carolclemans.org - read 'about' page for ministry details. Carol Clemans provides teaching, counseling, writing, life coaching nationwide (636) 448-0121. Join: www.patreon.com/carolclemans. Mins. Ref: Pastor Daniel Batchelor, Dupo, IL.



Vickie Hodges

Identity and Scripture VickieHodgesSharingLife@gmail.com

INTRO to LIFE Recovery Series

LIFE (Living In Freedom EVERYDAY) Recovery Series is an educational tool used for the Recovery of Damaged Emotions and Unhealed Memories. It examines the stages of healing

and how to overcome damaged emotions and unhealed memories left in the aftermath of life's disappointments and tragedies.

Life at times can be extremely complex and within these complexities come hurts, pains, traumas and abuses. These negative aspects and circumstances leave a trail of damaged emotions and unhealed memories and when left unattended, suppressed or buried, they become toxic and destructive.

Eventually, these toxic and destructive emotions and memories begin to control our behavior. We've all witnessed the person who lives life driven by damaged emotions and unhealed memories. In fact, we may "be" or "have been" that very person. It's the person who has the mindset of 'do it to others before they do it to you.' It's the person who thinks everyone is trying to 'get one over on them' or 'outsmart them.' We feel as if we are being constantly threatened physically, socially, and emotionally.

Why live life in this excruciating painful manner when we can choose LIFE and begin living in freedom EVERYDAY?

Damaged emotions and unhealed memories are areas of our lives that need a special recovery and healing. These particular areas are not subject to ordinary prayer, discipline and willpower. These areas need a special kind of understanding.

Regardless of whether we have been 'churched or unchurched,' 'raised on a pew or in the streets,' 'lived in a palace or under a bridge,' 'college-wise or streetwise,' 'male or female, 'young or old,' we will all come to a place and time in our life when we need recovery for damaged emotions and unhealed memories.

The freedom we so desperately seek and long for is within our reach. The obstacles that stand in our way cause our senses to become dulled. It becomes difficult to see, hear, or even feel to know which direction to go to find this freedom. We all can use just a little guidance and direction to get us on the right path...the emotional healing path. Let the journey of LIFE (Living In Freedom EVERYDAY) begin!

Vickie Hodges is a UPCI licensed minister with 35 years experience in Early Childhood Education and Brain Development Research. She is the author of LIFE (Living In Freedom EVERYDAY) Recovery Series. Vickie is a trainer and a speaker at seminars, retreats, conferences and universities. She can be reached at VickieHodgesSharingLIFE@gmail.com



Daniel Sirstad

Relationships 201

Perfect Love

What is perfect love? It seems reasonable for the beloved disciple to be the only one to write about perfect love (1 John 4:18). I have been curious about this descriptive

term for much of my life. Perfect love is not where a relationship starts. As a teenager, I remember my mother brushing off any crush I had as 'puppy love." I distinctly remember being irritated by those words at the time. Equally irritating is the understanding over time that she was right.

Perfect love is not even a love that comes mid-term in a relationship. There is no question that love in a relationship is perfected over time when allowed, denoting a process.

Perfect love is a love containing no doubt of reprisals in the relationship, which takes time to develop.

There is a temperament called "Supine," which is motivated by the promise of reward and the fear of punishment. These dueling motivating forces can be very challenging.

John references a fear of punishment. It is this fear that is dispelled by perfect love. But when does the dispelling of the fear take place?

I have met with many who questioned their faith in God because they wonder how God's love can be in them if there is fear present? Something must be wrong with them. So, their relationship with God contains doubt, which negatively impacts that and other relationships.

Doubt in any relationship is a destructive force. And, where there is doubt, there is a lack of trust. And, love does not flourish in an atmosphere of distrust.

Perfect love is a love that comes to fruition at the end of the relationship. It is a mature love that takes a lifetime to develop.

Don't focus on your human imperfections. Instead, focus on the perfectness of God. Trust in the Lord. Have faith in His Word.

When you come to the end of your journey, the promise is, the perfect love of God will have dispelled all fear of punishment, leaving only the promise of reward.

I am available to speak at your marriage, family or men's conference.

Dr. Daniel Sirstad is a UPCI ordained minister and has a PhD in Clinical Pastoral Counseling. As the Executive Director of DayStar Ministries, Dr. Sirstad travels extensively teaching and preaching on relational subjects. He counsels for many congregations throughout North America using HIPAA-compliant video technology. dsirstad@dsministries.com



Accounting & Tax

Government Stimulus 2021

At the time of this writing, the new relief bill has just been signed into law. It is around 6,000 pages long, and it will take months for additional SBA

and IRS guidance to be written. For now, here is what we know.

- 1. \$600 will be mailed to those that qualify.
- 2. Additional PPP funds available. If your organizations income decreased by 25% in the first, second or third quarter of 2020, compared to the same quarter in 2019, you are eligible for additional

- funds. The additional loan is based on 2.5xpayroll and payroll costs.
- 3. If you were eligible for more money on the first round of PPP loans, you can request an
- 4. For for-profit entities, Congress made clear that deductions are allowed for expenses paid from PPP funds.
- 5. As we anticipated, PPP loans under \$150,000 will have a simplified one page forgiveness application.
- 6. If you did not get all of the PPP loan forgiven, the expenses allowed has been expanded - it may be worth looking at and discussing with your lender.
 - 7. If you received an EIDL loan AND a PPP

loan, you no longer have to deduct the EIDL loan from the PPP forgiveness amount. Also, EIDL loans are still available, including the \$1,000 grant per employee.

8. A deduction for 2021 contributions of \$600/couple is allowed for those that do not

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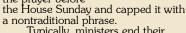
THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS

"Amen and Awoman" -**Democratic Representative Prayer Ending Sparks Debate**

A Democratic representative's prayer that ended with the phrase "amen and awoman" in the U.S. House of Representatives launched

a debate about political correctness, gender, and religion

United States Representative Emanuel Cleaver, who also is a United Methodist minister, delivered the prayer before



Typically, ministers end their prayers by saying "amen" – a Hebrew word that means "so be it" or "it is so." Cleaver, though, made a statement about gender. He also delivered a

other religions.

"Bless us, and keep us," Cleaver prayed. "May the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us. May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon us and give us peace – peace in our families, peace across this land, and dare I ask, oh Lord, peace even in this chamber. Now, and evermore. We ask it in the name of the monotheistic God, Brahma, and God known by many

Brahma, and God known by many names by many different things. Amen and awoman," he concluded.

Cleaver formerly served as pastor of St. James United Methodist Church in Kansas City, Missouri.

The phrase sparked a debate on

social media. Other congressmen, as well as Christian news broadcasters, were quick to point out that the word "amen" has nothing to do with gender, taking to Twitter and other platforms to voice their concerns.

The prayer ending has been understood by many as further evidence of a distorted view of reality caused by radical political correctness.

House Democrats Delete Terms "Mother" and "Father" in Gender-**Neutral Rules**

The Democratic-controlled U.S House of Representatives have passed new rules that – for the first time – delete gender-specific terms such as "father, 'mother,'" "himself" and "herself" and replace them with gender-neutral language like "parent" and "themself."

The new rules for the 117th Congress, which passed 217-206, also erase all

pronouns from the rules.

In one specific instance, the new rules delete "himself or herself" in place of "themself." They remove phrases such as "he or she" in place of phrases like "Member" and "Delegate." They also redefine the meaning of "relative" and "family member."

A Democratic press release lauded the historic change, saying the new rules "honor all gender identities by changing pronouns and familial relationships in the House rules to be gender-neutral."

But critics, including evangelist Frank-lin Graham, said Democrats had gone too far. Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, said in a floor speech that the move was a "race to wokeness.



You Can't Be a Faithful Christian and Be Pro-Choice, Albert Mohler Says

The pro-life community has Scripture and history on its side in opposing abortion, theologian Albert Mohler says in a new podcast. Mohler, the president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, also says he believes "faithful Christians" cannot be pro-choice.

"Can religious people be pro-abortion, or in this case using the language that they prefer, 'pro-choice'? Well, the answer is of course religious people can, but I would argue that consistent Christians cannot," Mohler said in a recent edition of *The Briefing*. "... I do not believe that one can be a faithful Christian and do anything other than uphold and contend for the dignity and sanctity of every single human life, including the life of the unborn.

Mohler pushed back on an article in *The Hill* that argued prochoice pastors like Warnock have the Bible and history on their side. "Just consider the fact that the Bible begins with the unconditional affirmation of the fact that every single human being is made in God's image," Mohler responded. "And then jump from Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 to Genesis 9, where we are told that the very worth of a human being is that every single human being is an image-bearer.

"... In the [Psalms], you have David, in the womb, speaking of God knowing him. ... David speaks of God knowing him, knitting him together when he was in his mother's inward parts

"But it's not just about knowing about David; it's the fact that God knew David. That is to say, David was a person already known by God, the omniscient and omnipotent creator. And David existed only because God intentionally said, 'Let there be life,' even in David's mother's womb.

Theologians who argue the Old Testament supports abortion rights are wrong, Mohler said. He addressed one of the arguments: "What is looked at here is the fact that if you are looking at penalties found in the Old Testament for murder, you'll notice a different penalty when it comes to the murder of someone who is walking on the earth - that is, a person who has been born - and a murder that eventuates in a miscarriage. But that should not be read as to understand that an unborn human being has any less

dignity and sanctity of life than anyone else."

The Christian church has opposed abortion from the beginning, Mohler said. He quoted the Didache, an early Christian document dating to the first century A.D. It addresses abortion.

The Didache stated that the teaching of the Christian church comes down to the way of life versus the way of death. The way of life commands that Christians shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not murder a child by abortion or commit infanticide," Mohler said. "Both abortion and infanticide were common in the Roman empire, but Christians were forbidden to murder any child, born or unborn, and the way of life, as the Didache made clear, honors the sanctity of life."

Leaders in the early church opposed abortion, Mohler said.

"Clement of Alexandria, who lived between 150 and 215, made clear the sin of women who 'in order to hide their immorality, use abortive drugs, which expel the matter completely dead, abort at the same time their human feelings.' Tertullian, another early church leader in the years 160 to 240, taught that 'We may not destroy even the fetus in the womb, while as yet the human being derives blood from other parts of the body for its sustenance.' hinder a birth,' said Tertullian, 'is just a speedier man-killing.'"

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ Calvary Church and Legacy Church, both based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, were fined \$10,000 after local officials alleged that both churches violated the state's COVID-19 restrictions, The Christian Post reports. A spokesperson from Calvary Church said in a response, "Vulnerable people were discouraged from attending, every other row was cordoned off in the church's spacious sanctuaries, mask-wearing was encouraged, and family units that came together, sat together.

Despite the coronavirus outbreak, according to Lifeway Christian Resources, Bible sales increased across the globe this year. As Christian Headlines previously reported in April, LifeWay Christian Resources saw an increase in sales of 62 percent in one week as opposed to the previous year. Alabaster Co., a Bible publisher known for its visually artistic individual books of the Bibles, also saw an increase in Bible sales of up to 143 percent from 2019.

SOCIAL TRENDS

ASL Sign Language Bible Finally Completed After 39 Years

When Renca Dunn talks about having the Bible in her own language for the first time, she emphasizes the adjectives. In English, she has no problem understanding the people, places, and things of Scripture. But in her own language, the nouns vibrate with life and emotion.

The clapping trees. The singing birds. The dancing meadows," Dunn says. "The persistent Esther. The revengeful Saul. The weeping Magdalene. Most of all, our loving Jesus

With the translation of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel in the fall of 2020, Dunn and 3.5 million other deaf people finally have the complete Bible in American Sign Language (ASL). It's been a long time coming. The translation has been in the works since 1981, when Duane King, a minister in the Independent Christian Church, realized that

English was not the heart language of deaf people in America. ASL was.

King, who is a hearing person, started learning to sign after meeting a Christian couple in 1970 who didn't



come to church much because they couldn't understand what was going on. He and his wife, Peggy, were moved to meet this need and started a church and a mission for the deaf near one of the nation's leading deaf schools in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Then, after years of church meetings, small groups, and Bible classes, the Kings became convinced it wasn't enough to sign the English Bible; the Bible needed to be translated into ASL.

Editor's note: This is significant to Bible prophecy, according to Matthew 24:14. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

LEGAL TRENDS

Supreme Court Says Government Can Be Sued for Money Damages When Religious Liberty is Violated

The U.S. Supreme Court delivered another victory for religious liberty this week when it sided with three Muslim men in a case that could benefit churches, faith-based organizations and the broader Christian community, a legal expert says.

The justices, in an 8-0 decision Thursday, ruled that the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act allows for lawsuits seeking monetary damages when the federal government violates a person's religious liberty. Under the ruling, lawsuits can be filed against government officials in their individual capacities.

Although the case involved three Muslim men who were placed and then taken off the No Fly List, the decision could benefit any faith community that sees its religious freedoms violated by the federal government, said Stephanie Taub, senior counsel for First Liberty Institute. "It's a victory for religious liberty, primarily because it will stand as a warning to federal officials that they have to be careful to respect religious freedom," Taub told Christian Headlines.

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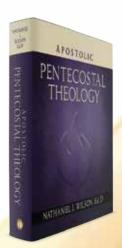
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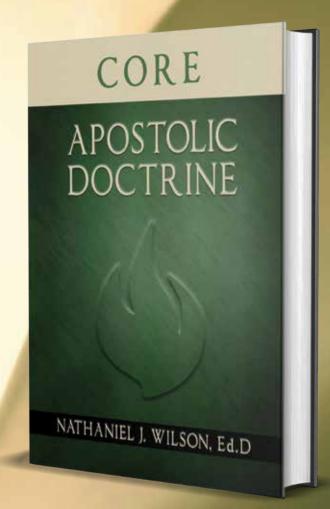
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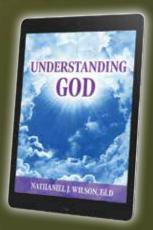


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JERUSALEM

Transcribed by Jordan Blake

As Christian believers, we have a wonderful relationship with an Old Testament heritage. Our faith did not begin in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Our faith begins in the first chapter of Genesis. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth..."

We teach and preach from the Old Testament Scriptures because the Law of the Old Testament is our schoolmaster. It all points to Jesus Christ. We have to understand that the Law of Moses was temporary, it pointed forward, and it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The book of Hebrews is written to Christian believers who were being challenged to return to their former life under the Law of Moses. This was not simply a return to rituals and celebrations from the past. The author of the book of Hebrews builds a case, line by line, and chapter by chapter, that Jesus completed and fulfilled the law by his life, death, burial, and resurrection.

The Blood of Jesus

To become believers in Jesus Christ, these Jewish people had placed their faith in the work of Jesus for their salvation. They no longer relied upon the obsolete system of sacrifices for the blood covering for their sins. Part of their acceptance of Jesus was to understand that the blood of bulls and goats was unable to forgive sins. These sacrifices simply provided a temporary covering, and these sacrifices all pointed to the Messiah. Through Jesus and His single supreme sacrifice, all sin for all time could be literally remitted and washed away.

The blood of Jesus' superior sacrifice was, and is, applied to believers through an honest recognition of our sins, our true repentance, our confession of faith in Jesus as Savior, our accepting this by faith. Repenting of sins, being baptized in the name of Jesus, and receiving of the gift of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is the New Testament evidence of a complete salvation experience. Old Testament believers could only look forward toward this experience... the Old Testament saints of God could only struggle to see, through the shadowy revelations of the prophets, a wonderful future when old things would pass away and all things would be new!

Sorrows of Exile

For many centuries, the Hebrew phrase (L'Shana Haba'ah B'Yerushalayim) has been used in conjunction with the end of the Passover meal and celebration. It simply means, "Next year, in Jerusalem." The actual phrase has been traced all the way back to the 900's A.D. and became associated with the Passover celebration in the 1400's A.D. That is a long, long time. Next year, in Jerusalem!

had faced the judgment of God for their disobedience and their idolatry. So, God had removed them from the land He had given to them. It was tough. But it was necessary. They were driven out of their homes and cities, and dispersed throughout the world. This concept is what is called "diaspora." One of these specific exile seasons was in Babylon. It was there, with tears on their faces, that they hung their harps on the willows. One of these exiles wrote these things down, and it is included among the Psalms.

The Jews

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy" (Psalm 137:1-6).

The people of God, from their exile in a strange land, were among strangers with unfamiliar customs. These were people who had no real understanding of, or real appreciation for, the one true God and His Word. There, the Jewish people remembered Jerusalem. They remembered the beauty of the city God had chosen to place His name upon, and the times of gathering together as a blessed nation. With tears on their cheeks, and sorrow in their hearts, these homesick exiles hung up their instruments of music. Over a period of thousands of years, the Jewish people who were dispersed in many nations longed for Jerusalem as well .

A Ray of Hope

Somewhere back in the centuries, some precious Jewish man or woman allowed a ray of hope to break through. As their family sang the songs of Zion, recited the holy Scriptures, and remembered the Passover lamb of old at the end of their eating, someone lifted his or her voice so filled with longing and hope, and that precious child of God declared, "NEXT YEAR... IN JERUSALEM!"

I found an interesting article. I share it to let you know what this particular time was like for the Jewish people. The writer begins by stating, "Passover is always a memorable holiday in which we conclude the festive meal with a prayer that we should be next year in Jerusalem. But for those who were in Jerusalem in 1948, the memory was never forgotten."

He then continues to describe the state of Jerusalem at this point in time. He writes that the British had fallen through on their promise to give the Jews a homeland, and Israel was left war-torn. Amidst calls for a ceasefire, the Arab people continued fighting. There were snipers and heavy artillery, and citizens of Jerusalem were losing sleep over the nightly gunfire. All this time, supplies to the Jews had been cut off. The article later reads,

"Rations were given out in Jerusalem for Passover: two pounds of potatoes, one-half pound of fish, four pounds of matzo, one and one-half ounces of dried fruit, one-half pound of meat, and one-half pound of matzo

flour. For the trapped citizens of Jerusalem, who had become accustomed

Guest Pulpit

to privation, the Passover provisions seemed like a banquet... the news of the Israeli advances and the retreat of the Arab forces in the Galil and in the Haifa areas lifted up the spirits of the besieged residents of the Jewish capitol.

"The Passover Seder fell on April 23 that year. It was not a particularly merry affair. On the verge of their national freedom, the inhabitants of Jerusalem sat somberly around their tables. This was the first time since the nightly shellings that the city's citizens had come together in assembly in the various homes throughout the city that had been the dream of two thousand years' Seders. Tonight is a holiday, but tomorrow the struggle will go on.

"As they sat to begin the Seder, they heard the beginning of the sniper's bullets looking for a straggler in the streets. But tonight was different. As they opened the door, as they had done for scores of generations, to welcome in Elijah, there was no fear. Tonight is a night of divine protection. As the Holy One protected the Jews in Egypt, so shall He protect us here in the war-torn city of Jerusalem.

"'Once we were slaves, but today we are free men' recited in the Haggadah, took on new meaning. The British are leaving, the Arabs are attacking, and we are beginning our new national lives as free men in our own country. 'Next year in Jerusalem' had a meaning that we never before understood. We meant it; we would not relinquish our dream to return to our homeland, to the city that has been in our hearts through out the two-thousand-year exile.

Now we are free men, tomorrow we must continue

the fight to remain free.'

What a moment in the history of the world, when the remnant of God's people in Jerusalem were so anxiously awaiting the time when God would restore the land He'd given them. In a few short days after this Passover in 1948, God gave them their miracle and allowed His people to go home. The prophets had stated the nation would be born in a day, and on May 14, 1948, the United Nations made it official. Israel was declared to be an independent nation. Once again they were a nation and had a home.

Take Me There

Here and now, we live in this crazy world as strangers and pilgrims. There is an unfamiliarity about these days here. We are witnesses to the greatest moments in the history of the world. You might have said, "I would like to have been a part of the book of Acts early church! That must have been incredible!" Or even, "I wish I could have seen Jesus open the eyes of the blind or raise the dead back to life."

Well, yes. But all of those old saints longed for our day! We are so close to the coming of the Lord!

Jesus is coming soon! The evidence is everywhere! And although we know, life here is good in many ways, there is a part of me that just wants to hope... L'Shana Haba'ah B'Yerushalayim... "Next year in Jerusalem."

David Huff wrote a song that says,

Take me there. I'm longing for a place I've only seen in my thoughts and in my dreams.

Take me there, I'm weary of this world and I believe heaven is my destiny.

Maybe this will be the year Jesus returns! Who knows, maybe we will be home with Him before this year is ended.

The Bible tells us to comfort one another with words like this:

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren,

concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be



onathan Blake

caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

I hope these words fill you with hope and comfort. If for some reason, they fill your heart with fear and doubt, today is the day for you to get right with Jesus Christ. He is willing and waiting with arms wide open for you.

Jonathan Blake serves as pastor of First United Pentecostal Church of Pana, IL with his wife, Angela. They love spending time with their four sons, two daughters in law, and three grandsons. They also enjoy motorcycling, and refurbishing furniture.





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THE STEWARDSHIP GROUP



The Barnabas Blog

By Linda Schreckenberg



Bro. and Sis. Harrelson Dothan, AL

"Since 2006, I've had half a million people visit my blog," said Bro. Philip Harrelson, Pastor of The Pentecostals of Dothan in Dothan, Alabama.

At BOTT in 1994, he felt motivated to write to encourage preachers. He began writing letters

to eight men from 1994-2003. Through word of mouth, others wanted to be added to the list. Eventually he was sending out 70-85 letters around the country.

"When I went full time in 2006," said Bro. Harrelson, "I really didn't know anything about blogs. Finding WordPress to be challenging, I use www.blogger.com, free through Google. Preachers, who were discouraged, emailed him that the blog encouraged them to stay in it for the long haul. Barnabas14.blogspot.com is his blogsite, and he uses Twitter to announce he's posted a blog. He sends out email blasts to preachers who request sermon notes. He can also be found by searching "Philip Harrelson," and has Barnabas notes on that site that's like a companion to Blogger. He didn't write much during a two-year building program that consumed his time but hopes to be back on Twitter soon.

He's written a number of articles on the book *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan and his book, titled *The Holy War* that is a similar allegory to *Pilgrim's Progress*. Basically, it describes the devil attacking a city called Mansoul through five gates; The Ear-gate, Eye-gate, Mouth-gate, Nose-gate and Feel-gate. These are the gates through which good or evil must enter, so Bro. Harrelson wrote articles on "Storming the Gates."

He writes out of inspiration or on something that catches his attention. After reading about the Emerging Church, and surprised that it was already in the Apostolic church, he wrote articles on it. Bro. Mooney used his articles in his preaching and because of that, some District Superintendents contacted Bro. Harrelson. He said, "I got derogatory responses from younger generation preachers, but as time has gone by, the Emerging Church has come to nothing, and my warnings were accurate."

Bro. Ensey, President of TBC, had a theological forum and asked Bro. Harrelson to write on spiritual abuse. Bro. Harrelson turned that paper into a blog series and got a lot of responses.

He wrote a series on the top ten messages he heard his friend, Rev. John Harrell, preach in Bridge City, Texas, and articles about him on his 40th anniversary. Rev. Harrell, now retired, was a masterful preacher.

Pastor Harrelson hasn't authored any books but has been encouraged to put his blog articles into book form. He's had articles published in the Pentecostal Herald, the Forward Magazine, and is a regular contributor to the Alabama District Focus newspaper.

Preaching is one of his favorite writing topics, and he does a lot of book reviews on preaching. He said, "Preaching is the main thought about what preachers ought to do."

Bro. Harrelson writes his own Bible studies for the church and has an email list for everyone in his church. He pastors the church he grew up in, pastored by his father-in-law, Bro. Patterson. The church has an average attendance of 130-140 people.

He recalled the words of Bro. Grisham over 30 years ago as something that stayed with him. "There are three things you should do every day: 1) Touch God through prayer and through the Word; 2) Touch someone else through a phone call, writing a letter, card, etc.; 3) Touch something that's going to outlive you. And, the biggest thing you can do, that's going to outlive you, is to write!" Pastor Harrelson highly encourages anyone remotely interested in writing, to blog. He may be contacted by email at philipharrelson@gmail.com.

Navigating Worry and Anxiety in Children

By Gregg Stone



Kelsea Jones

Anxiety and worry doesn't have an age limit. In fact, most anxiety disorders develop during childhood and young adulthood. Having worked through difficult feelings of anxiety and worry through her childhood, and overcoming those challenges herself.

Kelsea Jones, a leader of the children's ministry at The Pentecostals in Kentwood, Michigan, has developed a resource that would help children in the age range that she ministers to regularly. "I've always found a place of empathy for others who've struggled with these issues," said Kelsea. "So, drawing from my personal experiences, training, and ministry, I developed an illustrated 'field guide' for kids and parents to navigate these difficult feelings."

A Journey Through Understanding Your Feelings is a helpful resource for Christian families in navigating feelings of worry and anxiety with children. "The main character, Froggy, takes them on a journey through their mind to understand their feelings a bit better," explains Kelsea. "As the children accompany Froggy through Heart's Glade, they'll gain understanding about their own feelings and

discover helpful habits to overcome them. Parents will appreciate the gentle and Bible-based guidance, and kids will love the beautifully illustrated examples that will stick with them through their own journey. The book guides them through the answers of five important questions: 1) What am I feeling right now? 2) How can I make my mind feel better? 3) Can I talk to God? 4) What are God's promises? 5) How can I pray?"

After seeing the need and finding a lack of resources on this subject, Kelsea decided it was time to do something about it. "Two months into the recent pandemic, a young mother in our church approached me to talk with her little girl who was showing signs of anxiety," said Kelsea. "As one of her children's ministers, her mother thought I may be able to help her unravel her feelings and find some relief. After researching and finding a lack of emotional wellness books specifically designed for children, I was convinced it was a gap that needed to be filled. And with my own history, I realized that God had uniquely prepared me for this purpose; to help children early in their journey and prevent greater emotional issues later. If they can help their mind 'feel better' when they're young, they will carry it with them into their adult lives. As I say in the book, 'We are all travelers and we are each taking

our own journey like this one.' While it targets children ages 5-11, I truly believe that anyone of any age could gain something valuable out of the book."

With the massive rise in depression and anxiety in adults and children through this pandemic season, the time couldn't be better to equip them with tools to help navigate their feelings. "COVID has turned everyone's lives upside down and we're all trying to learn this 'new normal,'" said Kelsea. "Children thrive when there is consistency, but with everything in their lives so upended it can create strong feelings of worry, anxiety and uncertainty. They desire to play with their friends, go to school like normal, and have the comfort of normalcy and they don't fully understand our current societal struggles. Even more concerning to them, they don't fully understand their own feelings. Now more than ever, we need to teach our children about the one thing that will never change: God will not leave them alone, and He will never stop loving them. God was with me through the process of seeing this become a reality (I like to say that we wrote it together), and my strongest desire is that He will use it to help children understand the big feelings of life, and meet them with confidence that God can provide."











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Word To The Wise:

"The real man smiles in trouble, gathers strength from distress, and grows brave by reflection." - Thomas Paine

A couple were in a busy shopping center just before Valentine's Day.

The wife suddenly noticed that her husband was missing and as they had a lot to do, she called him on her phone. "Where are you?" the wife said. "You know we have lots to do."

He replied, "Do you remember the jewelers we went to 10 years ago when we were engaged, and you fell in love with that beautiful wedding band; I couldn't afford it at the time, and I said that one day I would get it for you?"

Tears started to flow down her cheek and she got all choked up. "Yes, I do remember that shop" she replied.

"Well, I'm in the golf club store next to that."



"Wouldn't it be easier to just text God, rather than pray?

* * * * * * *

The teacher was helping one of her kindergarten students put on his cowboy boots. He asked for help and she could see why. Even with her pulling and him pushing, the little boots still didn't want to go on. Finally, when the second boot was on, she had worked up a sweat. She almost cried when the little boy said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet."

She looked and sure enough, they were. It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them on. She managed to keep her cool as together they worked to get the boots back on, this time on the right feet. He then announced, "These aren't my boots."

She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, "Why didn't you say so?" like she wanted to. And once again she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off his little feet.

No sooner than they got the boots off he said, "They're my brother's boots. My Mom made me wear 'em."

Now she didn't know if she should laugh or cry, but she mustered up the grace and courage she had left to wrestle the boots on his feet again.

Helping him into his coat, she asked, "Now, where are your mittens?

He said, "I stuffed 'em in the toes of my boots."



"I asked God to let me see you the way He sees you, so... speaking for both of us... knock it off!"

A ship engine failed and no one could fix it, so they brought in a guy with forty years' experience. He inspected the engine very carefully, from top to bottom.

After looking things over, the guy reached into his bag and pulled out a small hammer. He gently tapped something. Instantly, the engine burst back into life. The engine was fixed! Seven days later the owners got his bill for \$10,000.

"What?!" the owners said. "You hardly did anything. Send us an itemized bill.'

The reply simply said:

- Tapping with a hammer: \$2 - SsKnowing where to tap: \$9,998

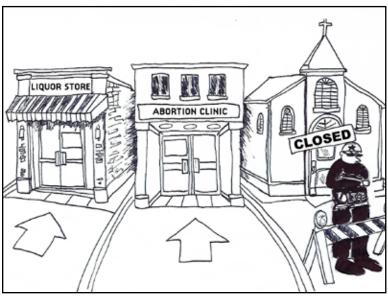
A mom and her children watched a special showing the birth of a baby.

Witnessing the miracle of life for the first time, one

fascinated child asked, "Mom, does that hurt?"

"Oh, yes, it does," she said, remembering her difficult deliveries. She paused to remember the beauty in her "quiverfull" of children despite the pain.

"Wow," said the kid. "Does it hurt the mother, too?"



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