



the
CHURCH
TRIUMPHANT



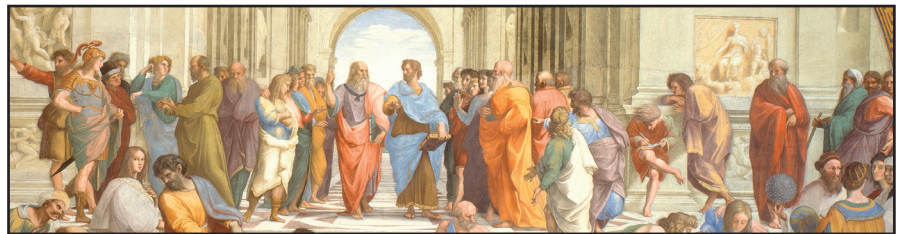
**PRESIDENT
JOSHUA B. CARSON**

“Who a person chooses as a guide in seeking to improve their understanding always speaks volumes about the individual. However, as illuminated in the life of today’s character witness, fulfillment swings on the hinge of application.”



Who Paints the Masterpiece?

Heralded as a masterpiece of classicism in the world of art, *The School of Athens*, painted by Rafael, is widely known and admired. This work is one of four frescoes, all of which seem to represent the quest for knowledge and understanding. While the physical painting is housed in The Apostolic Palace of the Vatican, the artist’s likeness is housed in the painting itself. Along with contemporaries such as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, one of the hidden gems within the painting is in the examination of the faces present. Rafael painted himself into the picture next to the column as a man seeking wisdom and knowledge from the central figure of Plato, as depicted in the face of Leonardo da Vinci. His desire for understanding was openly depicted by the strokes of his brush and illustrated by his proximity to the teacher. Who a person chooses as a guide in seeking to improve their understanding always speaks volumes about the individual. However, as illuminated in the life of today’s character witness, fulfillment swings on the hinge of application.



“The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions” (Matt. 19:20–22).

What a suit he must have been wearing! His shirt was no doubt pressed perfectly, his tie superbly sporting a double Windsor knot, and his snakeskin shoes polished well to shed the dust. Seemingly cool, calm, and collected, we watch him as he strides toward Christ for a conversation about the weighty subject matter of eternity. As a man who is follicly challenged (terminology only accepted by Wiktionary), I have a proclivity to picture him with a full head of hair—just thick and wavy enough to be impressive to guys in my stage of life. This story begins as an incredible moment of civility, portrayed by his humble acknowledgment of Christ. We watch the interaction unfold between him and Christ, and as readers we are thankful to see someone seeking full understanding. However, like an unanticipated uppercut, suddenly the story lands a devastating blow, leaving the reader feeling deflated and disappointed.

I’d submit for your consideration that the rich young ruler (like the artist Rafael) had painted a masterpiece, but it was only in his mind. The canvas of his imagination showed his prominence, possessions, and diligence existing harmoniously together with Christ as he anticipated the eternal blessings soon to be bestowed upon him. However, the challenge from Jesus was that he might become perfect—a word later translated by Paul in I Corinthians to mean mature. He is unable to accept the cost of the perfection that Christ asks of him, and he walks away saddened. He realizes that when Christ holds the brush, He determines not only what needs to be painted in, but what needs to be blotted out.

As readers, or more importantly followers of Christ, we are left with an important question: “Am I painting my life, or is the I AM painting my life?”

Joshua B. Carson

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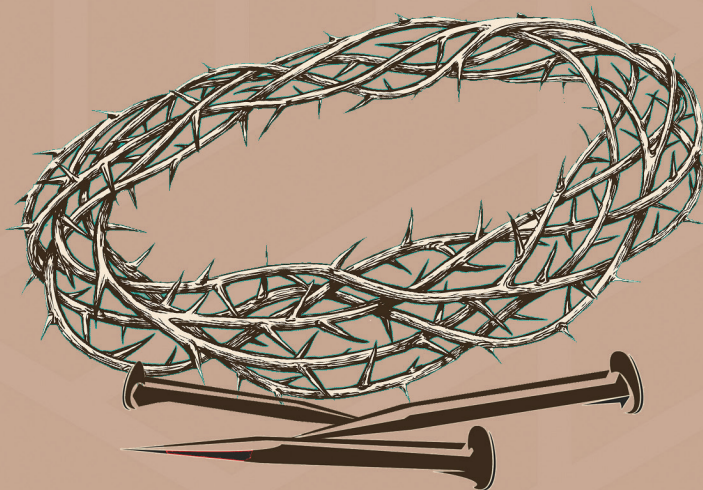
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FEATURE: The Church Triumphant - Pastor Jason Sciscoe

Mission Statement

♦To promote revival and growth among Apostolic churches and pastors by encouraging unity and cooperation among those of like faith and by providing a forum for the sharing of new ideas, ministries and programs.

♦To report on those trends and events which directly affect the work of the church.

♦To promote and enhance the ongoing ministry of Indiana Bible College.

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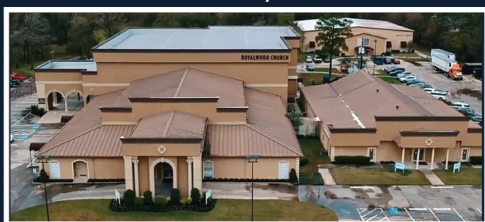
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our most SUCCESSFUL MINISTRIES for WINNING SOULS

Written By John L. Fonzer



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



Art Wilson, Wayne, MI - We are extremely big on door-knocking, but COVID has changed that dynamic. People are trusting people they know, so we are capitalizing on that and using small friendship groups. They connect by Zoom, Google Meets or social connections. It's saints reaching visitors and new people who have never been canvassed. We want them to visit the groups.

We have a guest reception after every Sunday morning service. Either I or one of the ministers goes back and we personally meet with the visitors that come to church. We try to build relationships right from the beginning, offering them any kind of ministerial help they may need.



Matt Perdue, New Castle, IN - The single greatest method that works for my wife and I is our day-to-day interaction with every person we have in "our world."

Two years ago, we built a home in our community. We have had the great honor of having several families over to our home. We connect with them and build trust. Before I even try and get them to church, I focus on getting them to my living room. Since then, we now have several neighbors coming and several baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost. This example is the

culture we try to teach at TPLC. It really is remarkable what can happen when we love our neighbor as ourselves. We have one church door, but we have LOTS of front doors. The impact of using our homes for small groups and ministry sites is AMAZING.

The personal connection as well as just simply being REAL is key. This world can smell a fake and phony a mile away. If there has ever been a time for the Christian world to reach out and be approachable it is now.

We have a program called Little Blessings. This program feeds hungry students in our local school system. There are about 1200 students as part of this program each week. This allows us to put the finger on our pulse in the community and to build bridges of ministry with families across our community. We use this ministry to reach out to families weekly, during special holidays, and we look for as many moments as we can to love on them and our community.



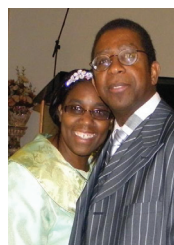
Donald Bryan, Pearl River, LA - The most successful method is the one you do. Evidence shows that if you will do something consistently, you'll grow.

The first six weeks after a visitor comes are critical. You've got to connect with visitors in multiple ways, at least six ways if you can. You win them or lose them in six weeks. If you can connect with them, your percentages of retention go up. We get their email address and cell phone number and we connect with them primarily with these two sources

of information.

Bible studies work for us. It's not the intrinsic knowledge of the Bible you're giving them; it's the connections.

People still have fundamental needs, and the fundamental need of fellowship is still there.



Courtney Bennett, Brighton, MA - The most effective tool we have found is friends inviting each other to church.

If someone comes and gets baptized and receives the Holy Ghost and they are not connected to anyone, we try to get them connected to someone in the church with similar interest so they will be able to start a relationship.

One of our most successful ministries is our campus ministry. Because many students are cash-poor, we feed them on a Sunday after church. Even when they are not in town, our campus minister has Zoom meetings with them. We have had them baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost.



Justin Anthony, Bellevue, NE - We try to be friendly, obviously, but we believe it is the presence of God that is drawing people to be saved and not our own effort. We are co-laborers with Christ.

90% of the people who attend service are believers. The reality is that church is not designed for the unbeliever. What we do week in and week out is for the Body of Christ, so we are inviting visitors to come into our family meeting to worship this Jesus they may or may not know. A lot of the things they see, feel, or experience are first time things for them. I have come to the realization that our hope for them to return is that God has already been working on them.

There are so many things we do and believe that they don't understand like why all the ladies wear skirts and why we speak in tongues. We are to try to do things that edify the body and not hamper the supernatural, but not to mystify it and complicate people's experiences by them walking out with a question mark when we step into the supernatural.

Our hope is that if we are prayed up, full of faith and the love and joy of Christ, they will say "I don't have answers for all of these things, however I feel God. I feel something." When we come to church and live hungry for God, to me, that is the best way to get people to want to come back.



Ryan Scott, Seattle, WA - The most effective outreach for us has been through the Internet. We're in the middle of Microsoft and Amazon world, so most of the people in our community live their life on the internet. We use tools to meet them where they are, and then try to nurture them to visit us through email, and such.

When guests do come, we try to follow up through email, texting, social media, and even snail mail. We just try to build as many relationships as possible.

the CHURCH TRIUMPHANT

Rev. Jason Sciscoe - Pasadena, TX

Written By Gregg Stone



Pastor and First Lady Sciscoe

Honor God, Love People, Transform the World. This is the mantra and mission of The Church Triumphant, located in Pasadena, Texas, a suburb of Houston. Pastored by Rev. Jason and Kimberly Sciscoe, The Church Triumphant is passionate about The Great Commission and making disciples. Bro. Sciscoe says, "With Houston being the most multicultural city in the United States, we think globally and act locally at the same time. We are a multilingual, multicultural church with a big heart. Our biggest

consistent compliment we receive is that people feel the love of God in our church. We view our main campus as a sending center. Our vision is to reach the nations around the world and the nations in our backyard. We are believing God for an endtime, world-wide, Jesus name revival."

Personal History

Growing up in Racine, Wisconsin where his dad, William Sciscoe was pastor, Bro. Sciscoe was not only exposed to many powerful preachers; his dad was also a great example to follow. "My dad has always been a powerful influence in my life," said Bro. Sciscoe. "He started preaching the gospel to me when I was four, and I received the Holy Ghost when I was five. I received the Holy Ghost during the preaching of one of my favorite evangelists. He promised to preach about Samson if I would stay awake all service. When I started to get tired, he would give me a look. I started praying to stay awake and ended up getting the Holy Ghost."

I felt the call to ministry when I was eight years old and preached my first five-minute sermon at age twelve at a kids' church event. My first formal sermon was preached to my high school Sunday school class at the age of fifteen. I preached my first revival for Murrell Cornwell at age sixteen, and I have been preaching ever since. I became a full-time evangelist straight out of high school and held my first extended revival at nineteen. I preached 33 times in 31 days. At nineteen, I also did my first summer missions trip to Russia. I went to Australia, Ethiopia, Israel, and Greece. I preached singles conferences, Holy Ghost crusades and revivals in more than twenty states in my early twenties. At age twenty-four, I was blessed to be able to minister in Ethiopia to more than 100,000 people. At twenty-five, I was honored to preach at our General Conference, and then spent three weeks in England preaching and teaching with Bro. James Dallas. My most significant ministry event, however, was when I married my best friend and prayer partner, Kimberly Brown, at twenty-five. We enjoyed evangelizing our first five years of marriage. At thirty, we were voted co-pastors of The Apostolic Church of Beaumont, Texas, with Rev. Marvin Cole. We learned a lot during our four years there and developed lifelong ministry friendships. In 2004, we moved to



A Convert is Baptized

Dallas, Texas and founded Triumph Ministries International Network. God blessed us with our daughter Julianna in 2005. We developed ministry resources, and traveled full-time domestically and internationally for seven years. Our long-promised son Kaleb came at the end of 2011. We were then voted in as Lead Pastors in Pasadena, Texas in February of 2012."

Pastor Sciscoe believes that knowing what you are called to do, and not called to do, is important. "I have tried my best to be true to what God called me to do," said Bro. Sciscoe. "What was I born to do? How can I make the biggest impact? I have been blessed with many great teachers and mentors and they exposed me to realms I did not know existed. At the highest level is love, the most universal truth of the gospel. Knowing love and living love are two different things. My number-one lifetime goal is to love like Jesus loves."

Principles of Growth and Revival

Having sat on many revival and prayer committees, Bro. Sciscoe has a simple approach to growth and revival, one that connects with people and one that they always respond to: Love. "Apostolic ministry, leadership development, and genuine love for people is key," said Bro. Sciscoe. "We live our mission statement – Honor God, Love People, and Transform the World. We target people who are hungry to learn and grow; whether it is someone who has never known or obeyed the gospel or a long-time member. I love being with and teaching people who are hungry for God."



An Altar Filled With Hungry Souls

"Our goal is to be a disciple-making church: to be disciples who make disciples. We accomplish that through relevant teaching, preaching, and our discipleship process. Our discipleship program, *Discipleshift*, has four levels. Each level lasts six weeks and consists of 50% teaching the Word and 50% group discussion of the content. Classrooms are designed in a relaxed setting that promotes participation. Relationship building through weekly accountability with peers and teachers are our power tools that aide in the transformation of students taking in the Word of God. In level four, students learn how to effectively be a witness by crafting their testimony, overcoming fears of talking to people, role playing, and learning how to teach a Bible study. It is very hands-on. Many in this level actually make their first disciple. After that, they are hooked. With *Discipleshift*, we're doing less event-based evangelism and more small group and one-on-one disciple making. The best part is that we are keeping much more of our harvest. We see evangelism as a lifestyle and core value of The Church Triumphant. Every person that goes through our discipleship course is taught the importance of being evangelistic. In addition to discipling our new members, we are in the process of bringing our whole church family through the 24-week discipleship course. Discipleship is the biggest focus of our church. The course is so coveted, we consistently have a waiting list to get in. It is an amazing program designed by members of our church, Cameron and Mikelle Secord, and you can see a sample of this program at *Discipleshift* on the Apple App Store."

Organization and Management

Organizational management refers to the art of getting people together on a common platform to make them work towards a common pre-defined goal. This is key to keeping a church with a host of ministries working like a well-oiled machine. "We do a lot of people grouping, online reports, communications and surveys through our church online management system, Breeze," explains Bro. Sciscoe. "Job descriptions are clear but can be flexible. They are written, discussed, and adjusted during the year as needed. We conduct leadership trainings and have used Colors, Strength Finder 2.0, Meyers-Briggs, Five Dysfunctions of a Team, 17 Laws of Teamwork, as well as our own

curriculum: The Happiness Factor. Most recently, we've enjoyed WorkingGenius.com. We conduct weekly strategizing and planning meetings with our Lead Team and Creative teams. We also do quarterly and annual strategizing meetings with our Core Team (department heads, ministry team leads) for implementing a new focus or event."

Involvement is crucial, and Bro. Sciscoe has a variety of ways to connect people and get them involved in kingdom work. "The goal is to get everyone involved in Bible studies, discipleship, and serving soon after they've been to our bi-monthly *Join the Family* luncheon," says Bro. Sciscoe. "During the luncheon, we introduce who we are as a church, our mission, vision, culture, and core values. We also find out the interests and talents of our new members. With involvement comes purpose, accountability, commitment, and best of all, joy. Because of COVID, we have lost some momentum in the area of serving. During the shutdown, we focused on ways our church family could serve from their home and in their community. Since we are back to in-person services, we are pulling our serve teams back together and recruiting new volunteers."



Pastor Sciscoe Preaching

Special Miracles

There are many testimonies of financial miracles, bonuses, raises and blessings from unexpected sources as a result of the giving hearts of the The Church Triumphant family. "However, our greatest miracles are our conversion stories," said Bro. Sciscoe. "We have ex-everything in our church family – prisoners, prostitutes, addicts, and everything in between. The before and after testimonies are our favorites. We also have been involved in special events that have been a blessing to our community as well as us. During Hurricane Harvey, we served 5,000+ people in our community. We were a distribution center for several weeks, and \$1.5 million worth of goods were donated to us from multiple sources and given to those affected by the storm. We were also a shelter for two days, housing 30+ people in our building,



Discipleship Class

and a temporary hospital for three days. One month later, we baptized 156 people in Jesus' name in one weekend. We were baptizing them five or six at a time in an outdoor, inflatable pool. To God be the glory! Our annual missions conference is a big highlight of the year. We give sacrificially to the global church, and in return, our local church is incredibly blessed. Sometimes we give by going and often we go by giving."

Current Facility

Located in the historic district of Pasadena, the church was established when the heart of the city was vibrant and thriving. The building has remained there through the years, closely connected to local government buildings. They share a parking garage with a neighboring police station on one side and the municipal government building on the other. "The Church was founded in 1951 by Bro. Galloway," explained Bro. Sciscoe. "In 1962, Rev. Arless Glass became the Pastor. His son, Rich, worked alongside his dad for almost twenty years before becoming pastor. Rich Glass was lead pastor for seven years before I came. We were elected in February 2012. Because Arless Glass had given fifty years into the foundation, it was strong and easy to build upon. He remains our beloved Bishop. We have a beautiful relationship that I treasure."

The building has been through three additions, and it is now as big as it can go in the present location. "Bishop Arless Glass oversaw all the additions," explains Bro. Sciscoe. "He wanted the building to be hurricane-

proof, and because of that, there are very few windows. It has a unique rectangular configuration due to the expansions. There are three floors, which makes the most of our space. We couldn't expand out further, so we expanded up. The main floor has a large commercial kitchen, fellowship hall, Cafe1030 (coffee shop and bookstore), staff offices, four discipleship rooms, and a sanctuary that seats 950 when all the chairs are out. Our second level has a nursery on one side and a large storage area on the other side. On the third floor, there are fourteen Sunday School classrooms, bathrooms, and a chapel that seats 100 kids. We currently have plans to expand the chapel space to hold 150 which will be used for youth as well as kids."

Despite COVID, The Church Triumphant is experiencing exponential growth and revival. "We have 1,000 members that call TCT home, and we have 450-500 consistently faithful in attendance," said Bro. Sciscoe. "In our best harvest year to date, we have had as many as 200 guests visit in one month. We believe true discipleship is the best reflection of our effectiveness. Over 150 people finished the 24-week discipleship course last year. Those disciples are making disciples. We have added more than forty new assimilated members since we reopened for in-person services. Our online presence has grown exponentially during COVID, and we average between 75,000 - 100,000 unique devices reached every month. When the world changed, we changed with it to meet the needs of the people. Our goal is to finish the church renovation, then expand our reach into the community. We see our building as multipurposed and intend it to be a daily church, not just Sunday and Wednesday. Bible studies happen four nights a week on campus and other Bible studies happen around the city. We would like to make our new sanctuary available for community events, meetings, etc. We would eventually like to have our Cafe1030 open Tuesday-Friday to the city. Beyond that, our next steps are more campuses launched through small groups."



Church Exterior

Future Plans

The future is bright at The Church Triumphant and they are working to complete their five lifetime goals. "We want to build a training center for Apostolic ministry, church planting, and discipleship making," said Bro. Sciscoe. "We also want to build a global media house consisting of: 24-hour prayer, social media connection, leadership, books, music, multi-lingual online training modules, and more. We desire to create a literacy training program as a community service as well as language studies to open up new communities to the gospel. We also want to build a home for battered women. We see a lot of broken families. The Church Triumphant has worked with other non-profits serving the community by providing housing and Bible-based teaching. We want to have our own program/house. Last but certainly not least, we desire to build an orphanage. We have sponsored orphanages overseas, but we have a vision to establish an orphanage and help reform the foster care system. Most importantly, we want to build upon the solid foundation already laid and see the greatest revival in the history of the world. We serve a big God. He is not angry when we ask too big. He is angry when we ask too small. Nothing is impossible with God!"

Bro. Sciscoe can be contacted by email at this address: jsciscoe@icloud.com.

Get to know our Metro Missionaries currently on deputation

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TODD & ANN BAUMANN | BOSTON, MA



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Why Boston, MA?

From abolishing slavery to other initiatives, Boston has been at the forefront of every important historical trend in America. We have flocked there as tourists, and yet abandoned it as a mission field. Although the devil may occupy a city, that does not mean he owns it. We believe God has called us to Boston as part of the end time revival sweeping through America.

Ministry Experience

The Baumanns pastored in Worthington, MN for seventeen years and the church experienced 1000% growth from under 20 members to over 200 members. They effectively reached into the Hispanic community and became the first bilingual church in Minnesota, providing a place for multiple generations to worship together regardless of the language they spoke. Todd and Ann also served in the North American Missions department, Apostolic Man department, the Minnesota Strategic Growth Team, and the Minnesota District Youth Committee.



JERRY & ANNIE WEST | WASHINGTON, D.C.



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Why Washington, D.C.?

D.C. is called the Capital of the Free World. But if you look beyond the tour buses and memorials, there is a Metro area filled with six million people who do not know the One that offers true freedom. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." God called us to this great American city to share the truth for knowing God is how one experiences true freedom.

Ministry Experience

For the past four years the Wests pastored in Franklin, KY. During that period the church doubled in attendance under their leadership (from 34 to 65 members), and partnered with another church to plant a new work in a neighboring city. Their church was among the top givers in each annual ministry offering for the Kentucky District. In addition to pastoring, Jerry and Annie served as Kentucky District Youth President for seven years and North Central Regional Representative for UPCI Youth Ministries for two years. Prior to their pastorate in Franklin, Jerry and Annie served as Youth Pastors for five years in Russellville, KY and on the youth staff at Calvary Tabernacle in Indianapolis, IN.



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Chad A. Parker
Executive Vice President

One of the greatest men I have ever known, and one who has made a tremendous impact on the Apostolic movement, the late Rev. Edwin Judd, often said while promoting his heartbeat, Global Missions, "If you can't go in person, then you can go in purse." Of course, he was

referring to giving for the cause of missions. Not everyone is called to go, but everyone is called to spread the gospel. If you can't go overseas, then you can help someone else get there through your giving!

The work being done at Tupelo Children's Mansion reflects this same principle. Some are called to serve. They arrive on our campus, roll up their sleeves, open up their hearts, and work. Others, however, may not be able to come in person, but they can promote this ministry through their generosity. Rather in person or in purse, all of those who answer the call are vital to fulfilling the mission of Tupelo Children's Mansion.

For those interested in personally getting involved, we are always accepting applications for called and qualified individuals and couples. Whether you are interested in teaching at Tupelo Children's Mansion Academy or forever impacting the children as their houseparent; preparing meals in the dining hall or using your skills to help maintain the facilities, there is always a great need for Godly men and women to serve in this ministry. With a pay package containing many generous benefits and a positive, Christ-centered work environment, Tupelo Children's Mansion is a great place to work!

However, if you believe in the mission of TCM, but cannot get involved personally, then we need you to get involved "purse-onally!" Through becoming a Special Kid Sponsor, a General Sponsor, or a Guardian Angel Sponsor, you can support the work that's directly affecting the children. Other options include giving through our memorial and tribute programs, which allow you to support the work of TCM while honoring someone special in your life. We also have programs for planned giving, such as blessing TCM in your will or donating a vehicle, in which case the value of the vehicle would be gifted to TCM.

If you do not already, I would encourage you to follow Tupelo Children's Mansion on our social media platforms. Like us on Facebook ([MansionKids](#)). Follow us on Instagram ([tupelochildrens mansion](#)) and Twitter ([@mansionkids](#)). You can also subscribe to our monthly newsletter, [#MansionFeed](#), by visiting our website at [www.mansionkids.org](#).

To get involved personally or purse-onally, or if you have questions, you can email me at chadparker@mansionkids.org. [#LoveWorks](#)

4 Ways to Make Your Church Digitally Friendly

By Author Unknown

Digitally friendly means the process of welcoming people to your church before they ever physically visit. Having a great online welcoming process can make the difference between people staying or leaving your website.

1) *Include A Welcome Section On Your Website.* The first step is to create a dedicated welcome section. Start by providing details about your church. Consider adding a short welcome video that briefly introduces your church, main staff and ministry programs. Give them insight into all the ways they can get involved in the church. You can always link to various ministry pages on your website for more in-depth information. The idea is to make this area of your website a one-stop-shop for everything new visitors need to know.

2) *Pin A Welcome Message to The Top.* Obviously, you don't want your message getting lost as you post new content. So, pin it to the top of your page of all social media. For instance, on Facebook, it only takes a few steps to pin any post so it's always visible at the top of your page. If they have questions, many people would rather send a quick message on social media or post a question in the comments. So, make sure someone's monitoring your social accounts to answer questions.

3) *Make Contact Details Easy To Find.* You'd be surprised at how many churches don't make their contact details easy to find. While having a contact form is great, sometimes people want to know who they're contacting. In addition to a contact form, you should include a phone number, email address, address and social media channels. Add information about how soon to expect a response based upon the contact method. This ensures people don't feel ignored when contacting you.

4) *Gather Contact Details.* Encourage everyone, both online and off, to provide contact details. Ask them to list their preferred contact method(s), such as call, text or email. Personalizing how you contact people makes them happier and more likely to provide their details. One other thing to do is explain why you want the contact details. Let people know that you simply want to be able to follow-up and welcome all new visitors. Ensure them that there's no pressure to join, donate or volunteer. In fact, for in-person visitors, you can even say it's okay for them to attend online if they prefer. The less pressure, the more welcome people feel.

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CITIES WORTH SAVING

Interviewed By Christina Li



Scott Sistrunk
St. Louis, MO

Bro. Sistrunk, tell us a little about yourself and your ministry.

I'm from Mississippi. I graduated from Jackson College of Ministry and got married in 1987. In 1988, I moved to the Detroit, Michigan area, and was there roughly until I moved to St. Louis in 2018. From 1991-1992, I was a furlough replacement

for Wilma Ruth Nix in Bophuthatswana, South Africa. I thought that was the beginning of my Global Missions career. While in Bophuthatswana, the Lord let me know that I was called to missions, but in North America. So, we came home after approximately a year. In 1994, we started our first church in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Most of my ministry has consisted of church planting. I did that until I was elected and came to headquarters in 2017. My term started in January 2018.

What makes metro cities so challenging to reach?

It's harder to reach 100,000 than it is to reach 1,000 and it takes more money for a church to be planted in a metro area. For example, Beattyville, Kentucky, population of 1,132, is 316% less expensive to live in than Manhattan. The most prevalent church planting model over the last fifty years is a self-supported bi-vocational pastor with token help from the UPCI. The maximum from Christmas for Christ is \$2,000 a month. So, a man has to have a job that supports his family and bear the expenses of starting a new church. This is nearly impossible in an expensive major metropolitan area.

For example, I started a church in a town of 2,000. Within the first two weeks, I met the city manager, the head of the city newspaper, and the five other pastors in town. I never got to meet any of those people when I lived in Detroit.

There are also demographic challenges. Jackson Heights, New York is a neighborhood of 300 acres with a population of 108,152. There are 167 different languages spoken there every day. In metro areas, there are large immigrant populations which include language and cultural barriers. A large portion of our churches are in rural or suburban areas. We need laborers who can reach the diverse cultures

in our major cities. It takes a long time to build trust and make connections. It's akin to Global Missions in that a missionary has to find a way into the culture.

That's why North American Missions has the Metro Missions Program, what "Cities Worth Saving" is about. Once you've established a church in those areas, it becomes self-sustaining because you're winning the people that are working the jobs there. It's able to grow and create a place in the community and start other churches.

Why do we have so few churches in the major metropolitan areas?

We are very much behind in metro evangelism. The Apostolic movement started in Los Angeles and Houston, but by 1945, the churches that formed were largely rural churches. Somewhere along the way, our methods did not adapt to reach our changing cities. Our primary methods were suited to start churches in small towns.

Currently, in the fifty-two metropolitan statistical areas that have over one million people, we have one church for every 117,000 people. In suburbs or smaller cities between one million and 50,000, we have one church for every 67,000. In cities below 50,000 (rural), we have one church for every 31,000 people.

Do we have workers willing to do the hard work necessary to launch churches in these areas?

The Metro Missions program has made a huge difference. For example, we had no UPCI churches inside the beltway until Jerry Staten went to Washington, D.C. He established a church there and twenty-six small groups across the city. In Chicago, Rick Gonzalez has a church and four daughter works in the Chicago area. Jack Yonts founded a church in Chicago and today they have several daughter works. Ryan Crosley has sixteen daughter works in the Fort Lauderdale area. In Los Angeles, David McGovern started one church and now has another.

In working with those willing to go, what sacrifices, and challenges are they going to face?

Economics aside, I don't think that

the sacrifices of planting a church in a metropolitan area are really any different from what one might make in a rural area. Sacrifice is part of what's necessary to build you as a Christian and to build the Kingdom of God. Challenges are what I would call them rather than sacrifices. Jesus said, "Take up your cross and follow me." No matter what you decide to do, a cross is coming and it makes us better.

I think one of the great mysteries is why we approach missions in North America differently from how we approach it globally. David Bosch called it the "Myth of Saltwater," as if something changes about missions when you cross saltwater.

I want to implement the Global Missions model in North America. Going next door is just as much missions as going across the world. We in the UPCI have tended to approach Global Missions much more on the Apostolic model than we do in North America. When I was in South Africa, the Lord began to talk to me about implementing the Global Missions Model here in North America, especially in the metro areas.

What success have we had thus far?

Since the year 2000, we have made a lot of progress. For example, in 2000, in these million-plus areas, 27% of our churches were in those areas. To date, 34% of our churches are in those areas. In the last twenty years, we've gone from 1,002 churches to 1,472 churches in these areas.

We are planting churches in the suburbs and in our major metro areas. Our Cities Worth Saving offering has been going to support those missionaries. At the end of this fiscal year (June 30), we will have sent five metro missionaries to the field.

If someone wanted more information, how would they contact you?

Email me at ssistrunk@upci.org or go to www.metromissions.faith to find out more about the Metro program and get an application to be a Metro Missionary.

apostolicalendar 2021

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	SPEAKERS / NOTES	CONTACT / INFO
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	Tom Dibble	Visit www.indianabible-college.org for more details.
APR 15	Move the Mission Kickoff Formerly Sheaves for Christ, Move the Mission is the fundraising ministry of the Youth Ministries of the United Pentecostal Church International. Since its inception in 1953, over \$134 million has been raised to fund missions and ministries around the world.	This event will be promoted at churches nationwide.	When you invest in Move the Mission you intentionally share the gospel around the world!	Visit www.movethemission.com for more information.
APR 15-16	Southwest Youth Conference Southwest Youth Conference is for all 12-30 year old youth and adults, focusing on uniting, equipping, and empowering this generation to lead!	Life Challenge 4500 N Grandview Ave Odessa, TX 79762	Ari Prado, Joshua B. Carson, Victoria Reyes, Joel Urshan, Dan Smelser, David Jennings	Visit https://lcodessa.org/events/ for more information.
APR 18	IBC Choir and Chorale at Calvary Tabernacle Join us online or in-person for a morning and night of worship and adoration to the Lord!	Calvary Tabernacle 902 Fletcher Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46203	If you cannot be there in-person, please join us online.	Visit www.calvarytabindy.com for more information.
MAY 6	Indiana Bible College Graduation Banquet Honoring the graduating class of 2021.	Event location will be announced closer to the event date.	The banquet speaker 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.
MAY 8-18	Indiana Bible College Chorale Tour The IBC Chorale embarks on an extensive tour of anointed praise and worship.	Destinations will be announced closer to the event date.	Join the IBC Chorale in what will surely be a wonderful time of worship and singing to the Lord.	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.northamericanyouthcongress.com
SEPT 9-10	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
OCT 1	CMI - Awakening Registration Available The Virtual Conference for Apostolic Campus Ministers	This event will be held online.	Aaron Soto, Lindsy Walker, Mike McGurk, Kaleb Saucer	
OCT 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.
NOV 1	AYC Online Applications Available Apostolic Youth Corps is a branch of UPCI Youth Ministries that facilitates the pairing of ministry-minded Pentecostal students with North American and international sites which need and desire evangelism assistance.	Destinations will be announced closer to the event date.	AYC North American trips are open to applicants 15-35 years of age. If an applicant is 14 and turning 15 during the same calendar year as the trip, they also qualify.	Visit www.apostolicyouthcorps.com for more information.
DEC 19	Christmas for Christ Offering Christmas for Christ is an annual offering received during the Christmas season that supports church planters in North America. Our goal is to raise \$6 million dollars.	Churches nationwide will participate in this offering.	Every church should set a special day to bring their best offering to Jesus. The official date is December 20, 2020, but can be altered according to the local need.	Visit www.christmas-forchrist.faith for more information.

Church Today: His Masterpiece



Jason Gallion

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His Masterpiece

Creatio Ex Nihilo is a Latin phrase meaning “created out of nothing.” It is most often used when describing God as the creator (Genesis 1:1). He created (Hebrew: “bara”) out of absolutely nothing except Himself. This is very different from the work of the doctor, lawyer, inventor, or even a minister. We build from existing material, we don’t create “ex nihilo.” We may join new pairs that have never existed, but every man in and of himself can only make, never absolutely create. There is uniqueness in every person, every church, and every period of history, but as novel as our inventions and ideas now seem, we never absolutely create.

It is absolutely necessary for the church to have God’s creative power. God remains able to “bara,” or create from nothing at any moment. That is why you should never rule out your ministry, your life, or your church because a situation looks bleak. There is hope for you, because God can always create anew. Each time someone is filled with the Holy Ghost, 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us they are new creatures, or literally, new creations. Only God can do that work. We have a part in the process, but our part is different from God’s. We have a responsibility to plant or water, but God gives the miraculous increase (1 Cor. 3:7).

It is a danger for the minister to act as if his own work were the real force in a ministry, a church, or a culture. Imagine a painter who, in youth and zeal, is moved to paint a landscape of mountains and pines purely because the transcendent beauty of the scene compels them. The goal and object of the art is to express the transcendent. The artist may sign the painting at the bottom of the canvas, but the artist isn’t fooled. He may be “the artist,” but not the Artist. The painter paints the canvas, but the real beauty is outside of himself.

The same artist, after success and worldly responsibility, may be moved to paint for different reasons. Perhaps it is no longer for transcendent beauty for which he paints, but his own pocket book or his own reputation. Painting can cease to be art, but instead be done solely for proprietorship. The signature at the bottom of each canvas may remain the same, but something has changed.

The same danger exists within the life of the minister. What begins as love for God and a desire to see others experience the same can change. We can lose sight of the God who creates and become overly concerned with our own creation. We can be more desirous of singing our name on each of our works than retaining the transcendent God.

The church belongs to God. It is a tremendous privilege to partner with and work alongside God as He creates anew in people’s lives. He is the great Creator and Artist. If our signature is on the canvas at all, it’s only fitting it be written in red, reminding ourselves of the grace of Calvary. The church is His masterpiece.



Bobby Killmon

Theology

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How do you answer claims that the book of Acts cannot be trusted as real history like we would understand it today?

I had that argument leveled at me at the seminary I attended. This is a challenge that is losing ground rapidly for critics of Acts. For instance, let’s look at one example as a case study. Acts 27:13-16 records when Paul was shipwrecked on his way to Rome. Luke writing by the Spirit gives us an incredibly detailed account of the storm and subsequent Paul’s shipwreck. Regarding the details of this historical account historians are pointing out Luke is more accurate than the most careful contemporaries of his time.

One historian shows, “Cauda, for instance, is precisely where a ship driven helpless before an east-northeast wind, from beyond the shelter of Cape Matala, might gain brief respite for necessary maneuvers and to set a more northward line of drift on the starboard tack... Luke fares much better than the encyclopedist Pliny, who might be regarded as the foremost first-century example of such a source. Pliny places Cauda (Gaudos) opposite Hierapytna, some ninety miles too far east... Even Ptolemy, who offers a reckoning of latitude and longitude, makes a serious dislocation to the northwest, putting Cauda too near the western end of Crete...” (Hemer, p.331) Hemer shows Luke writing by the Spirit was more accurate than any source we have from his day!

But why does Scripture include this minute data of a historical account? Luke gets picky details, not central to the theology, right again and again. These include weather patterns in specific seasons, the precise way sailors dealt with exact challenges in a particular storm, and detailed accuracy regarding specific ports.

Why would God inspire Luke to write with such accuracy in these tedious historical details? There is no particular doctrinal investment in these secondary historical claims. The reason is that God wants us to know “the certainty of the things we believe” (Lk. 1:4). God’s showing us His Word was written by eyewitnesses and that Luke, writing by the Spirit of God, was recording accurate history.

Critics who dismiss the inerrancy of Scripture can no longer claim, “Well, it’s not history as we understand it, but more like theological storytelling.” How in the world did Luke know which inconspicuous little island a northeast wind might drive his ship toward in a storm? Especially when the other experts in the first century all get its location wrong?

What God assures us in these details in Acts is that His Word is inerrant in not only history but also geography and science. More importantly, this proves with certainty that Scripture can be trusted in its spiritual truths as well! What a great day to be an Apostolic.



T. W. Massengale

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Faith Goal Setting Only Works When You Do It

Someone far more successful than I once said, “people seldom have trouble reaching goals, they only have trouble setting

them.” I can tell you without hesitation, those who grow are avid goal setters. They often have both a five-year and a ten-year growth plan. They can tell you what their goals are each year for attendance, members and converts – and they have these numbers projected out for five years. Then, each year, they set goals for key areas of evangelism: church visitors, home Bible studies, home fellowship groups, bus ministry, new convert

retention, and more. They also set goals for program improvements several years out.

These pastors tend to see goal-setting differently than most. They understand, as far as the church application, goal setting is simply an expression of faith. Faith “is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb. 11:1) They know that the goals they set are not their goals, but God’s goals. They have sought God for direction and feel these are the goals God would have them reach for by faith.

Churches that believe in goal setting are also careful to apply faith principles to each goal. The world likes to “shoot for the stars in the hopes of hitting the moon.” Faith-based goal setting only sets goals they know, without any doubt, they can reach. Faith has no doubt (Matt. 21:21). So the goals they set, they know, beyond any doubt, they can reach, with God’s help. Then, they sit back and watch while God does “exceedingly

abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20).

Faith-based churches also know that simply setting a goal is but the first step. They must also develop an action plan to see that goal realized. To reach attendance goals, they must attract more visitors. To reach home Bible study goals they must train more HBS teachers. To reach bus and van ministry goals they must start new routes and train more workers. To reach new convert retention goals they must have a solid discipleship plan implemented and strive to perfect it. And perhaps most importantly, they know that the pastor can’t do all of this without lots of help, so they are constantly training new workers and leaders that can take ownership of these goals from inception to completion.

If you would like suggestions on how to establish faith-based goalsetting in your church, call (317) 781-7712 and request the ‘Faith Goal Packet.’ The cost is just \$5.00.



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Carol Clemans

Spiritual Growth

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Do Your Thoughts Paralyze Your Potential in Life?

God, our great Creator, knows the power of words because His Word tells us that life and death are in the power of the tongue. Thoughts produce feelings and then we speak or act out from how we feel. When thoughts are negative because of past or present painful events in life, words and actions are usually negative. People can be saved (Acts 2:38) but be deeply emotionally wounded.

It is the devil's delight to help us focus on the emotional hurt and pain and keep us in the toxic thought zone. We can be paralyzed in our service for God because we are worried about what other people may be thinking about us. We must learn how to look at ourselves through God's eyes!

God's Word has the answers to being transformed by renewing our minds. I have witnessed the power of the Word of God transforming the heart, soul, and mind, of thousands of people in 28 years of Bible-based counseling and teaching. God has the answers for anxiety, fear, sexual abuse recovery, porn addiction recovery, marriage/family problems, suicidal thoughts, low self-esteem (God-worth), depression, etc.

Our God-worth comes from God as our Creator and He became our Savior. It is God's performance that makes me valuable. My value is not based on my pedigree or my performance.

We are foolish when we compare ourselves among ourselves. We all are uniquely designed by God in His image and likeness for His glory! We each are given gifts by God to minister to others.

Satan attacks leaders as well as laypeople with toxic thoughts. It is Satan's delight to paralyze everyone with his lie of low self-worth. God's truth (God-worth) will make us free!

We must stop comparing our performance with others. There is no competition in God's value system, because we are all made as unique individuals for His glory. God is our judge, not others. Thank God!

www.carolclemans.org – read 'about' page for counseling/teaching/life coaching. Join: www.patreon.com/carolclemans. Watch www.youtube.com/c/carolclemans. Call (636) 448-0121. Mins. Ref: Pastor Daniel Batchelor, Duplo, IL.



Vickie Hodges

Identity and Scripture

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LIFE-Living In Freedom EVERYDAY (Part 2)

In last month's column, we found ourselves entering into an emotional healing journey as we faced or confronted the emotions of guilt, shame, and worthlessness which led to condemnation and victimization. We also determined which lens we were viewing these emotions from. Today we will discover additional emotions/feelings that have crept into our lives while being paralyzed by the emotions of guilt, shame, and worthlessness which had already plagued our spirit, soul, and body. We will also recognize how these damaged emotions and unhealed memories affect our behavior.

First, go ahead and circle some of the things from this list that we have gained while keeping our emotions and memories suppressed, buried, and hidden. INSECURITIES—ANGER—HATRED—JEALOUSY—DEPRESSION—ANXIETY—NERVOUSNESS—MALICE—DISCONTENTMENT—LOVE—JOY—PEACE—HAPPINESS—PATIENCE—CONTENTMENT—KINDNESS—RESTLESSNESS—PARANOIA—FEAR—SLEEPLESSNESS—RAGE. Next, take this time to circle things from this list we may have lost as our emotions and memories continue in a downward spiral and become toxic and destructive. JOB—HOME—FAMILY—VEHICLE(S)—SECURITY—JOY—LOVE—PEACE—CONTENTMENT—HAPPINESS—FRIENDS—SLEEP—KINDNESS—SOUND MIND.

Finally, from the items, we've circled it is plain to see that our damaged emotions and unhealed memories are now controlling our behaviors. These toxins have become so destructive that our mind is now plagued like a continuous nightmare. How did we ever get to this place? And have we lived here for so long that we've become so familiar with the names on every street sign—FEAR Rd., RAGE Ln., HATRED Blvd.? We try to hang on to some sense of normalcy but there is nothing NORMAL about this place. In conformity, have we gone from being 'human' to being 'dehumanized'? We no longer recognize ourselves. There is freedom from this 'inhuman' way of living. Dr. James Hughes once made a simple yet profound statement, "The number one root of all life's problems is 'selfishness.'" Continue with me next month as we arrive at the halfway mark of this emotional healing journey and as we discover how to turn 'selfishness' into 'selflessness.'

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 or (281) 489-0055.



Daniel Sirstad

Relationships 201

www.dsministries.com

Apostolic Moral Purity

"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;" (1 Timothy 2:8).

Paul gives men three requirements to be a godly man:

1. Lift up holy hands in prayer. (Having a body free from sin.)
2. Worship without anger. (Have a spirit free from anger.)
3. Worship without doubting. (Have a mind free of doubt.)

Maintaining a life of moral purity involves each of the above ingredients.

Over the last few years, I have worked with several individuals regarding moral purity. Several months ago, after working with a gentleman, I felt impressed to pursue a platform, on a larger scale, that would accommodate thousands of Apostolic men.

The purpose will be two-fold. First, to help people break free from carnal desires, such as pornography, and obtain, then maintain moral purity in their Christian life. Statistics show about 70% of Christian men currently participate in porn at some level. The second purpose is to help those that want to help those that need help by being a resource.

As a result, I began working with a group of men across the continent to bring about this vision's formation. We recognize there are tremendous Christian programs already in existence. However, we have not found one that incorporates the Holy Ghost's power as we know Him.

To this point, we have developed a three-tier system: 1) An online meeting incorporating anonymity, which will propagate the message that you are not alone, and we will fight this battle together. Real-life testimonies will be part of this meeting. Confidentiality and anonymity will be respected. 2) Online meetings, made up of smaller groups, to provide instruction to be an overcomer in Christ. 3) Online meetings, dealing with real-life issues Apostolic men face continuously.

Developing this is not a small task. We need more volunteer help. We especially need writers, web developers, graphic designers, and those knowledgeable with zoom. We can use some seed money too. If any of this resonates with you, contact me: dsirstad@dsministries.com or 503-481-2934 (PST).

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



Delano Sherley

Accounting & Tax

Local Income Taxes

Many cities impose a local income tax that is based upon where a person either lives or works. How these taxes are calculated varies from state to state, but often if a tax is calculated on the work location a full or partial credit is applied to the taxes that are based upon the residence location, thus avoiding double taxation. (Check with your city, as some

do not prevent this double taxation).

If you pay taxes based on your employer's location and you work from home or travel outside of that city, you are probably eligible for a refund for the taxes you paid for the time you were not working in that city. (This generally does not apply to holiday and vacation time). Of course, if the tax rate assessed on the work location is the same as the residence tax rate, any reduction in one will result in an offsetting increase in the other, resulting in no benefit to the taxpayer. However, if the residence

tax is less or does not exist, requesting a refund for the tax paid for time not physically in the work location city makes sense. Many cities also allow you to request a refund for up to three years from the due date of the tax return. Check with their tax department to see what documentation is needed to apply for the refund.

Delano Sherley is a CPA and president of Delano Sherley & Associates, Inc. He can be reached at 513-737-1314. Delano Sherley & Associates, Inc., 8366 Princeton-Glendale Rd., Suite B5, West Chester, OH 45069. Email: Delano@dsacpa.com Website: www.dsacpa.com

THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS**CA Judge Legalizes Three Homosexuals to Become Fathers Of Two Surrogate-Born Children**

A children's rights activist decried a California judge's ruling allowing three men to be listed as the legal parents of two children born to surrogate mothers using donor eggs as being the consequence of laws that sacrifice the wellbeing of children to benefit the desires of adults.



The homosexual male "throuple" includes Ian Jenkins, Alan Mayfield and Jeremy Allen Hodges. The three-way relationship happened after Jenkins and Mayfield, who met nine years ago, invited Hodges to join the couple eight years ago.

The two children who belong to the trio of men are half-siblings. Jenkins wrote a memoir about the throuple's unorthodox relationship in the book, *Three Dads and a Baby*.

Katy Faust, founder of children's rights organization Them Before Us, and the author of a recent book of the same name, noted in a Monday interview with The Christian Post that much of the media is framing their coverage of these adult men as being victims of a system that did not make it effortless to acquire someone else's children.

"Of course the real victims are the two motherless children who were intentionally separated from the woman who provided half of their genetic identity, the woman to whom they bonded during their first 9 1/2 months of life, and who will be starved of the daily maternal love that all children crave," Faust said.

Senate Democrats Defeat Measure Protecting Babies Who Survive Abortion

Senate Democrats have defeated an amendment that would have allowed for criminal and civil penalties for doctors who fail to provide health care for a baby who survives an abortion. Needing 60 votes to be placed in the budget resolution, the amendment by Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) received 52 votes. A total of 48 senators – all Democrats – opposed the amendment.

The amendment would have required that doctors give a baby who survives an abortion the same health care as any other baby that age. Specifically, the amendment would have allowed for the "creation of criminal and civil penalties" for "providers who fail to exercise the same degree of care for babies who survive an abortion or attempted abortion as would be provided to another child born at the same gestational age."

The pro-life Susan B. Anthony List applauded Sasse and openly criticized senators who opposed the Senate amendment.

**New Arkansas Law Says Government Can't Close Churches Unless Everything Else Is Closed, Too**

A bill that limits the governor's power to close churches and that broadens religious liberty protections for houses of worship became law in Arkansas this week.

The bill, HB 1211, passed by overwhelming margins in the state House and Senate in the midst of a worldwide pandemic that saw governments force churches to close their doors.

Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, a Republican, said Wednesday he would allow the bill to become law without his signature. He defended his actions during the pandemic, saying they had not infringed on religious freedoms.

"Great care has been taken by the executive branch to avoid infringing on these sacred rights," Hutchinson said in a letter this week to House Speaker Matthew Shepherd, according to the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. "Churches and religious institutions are specifically excluded from any directives that could be interpreted as applicable to them."

The new law applies to states of emergencies. It says the governor "shall not enforce a health, safety, or occupancy requirement" that "imposes a substantial burden on a religious organization" unless the governor "demonstrates that applying the requirement to the religious organization is essential to further a compelling governmental interest and is the least restrictive means of furthering the compelling governmental interest."

The new law allows the governor to impose "health, safety, or occupancy requirements" on churches, but only if they are "applicable to all organizations and businesses."

Jerry Cox of the Arkansas Family Council said the new law will "help protect churches and religious groups from discrimination without hampering the government's ability to respond to an emergency." The Family Council backed the bill.

Alliance Defending Freedom also supported the bill becoming law.

"While public officials have the authority and responsibility to protect public health and safety, the First Amendment prohibits the government from treating houses of worship and religious organizations worse than comparable secular activities," said ADF legal counsel Greg Chafuen. "Arkansas has taken an important step to defend this right by enabling religious organizations to keep their doors open and protecting them from discrimination based on their religious identity or conduct."

The legislature's findings about the new law state that religion "provides extensive benefits to the country by meeting the spiritual needs of the populace and by supporting vital social needs, including without limitation social services, health care, and economic activity."

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ A group of Republican senators is asking Amazon.com Inc. to explain why it recently removed a book about transgender issues that had been on sale on the platform for about three years. "When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment," is no longer available on Amazon nor on its Kindle and Audible platforms. Amazon has been "unable to provide a sufficient explanation" as to how the book "violated a vague... 'offensive content' standard."

■ A leading archbishop is calling on President Joe Biden to stop defining himself as a "devout Catholic" because of his endorsement of abortion. The Christian Post reports. In an interview with The Catholic World Report (CWR), Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann, spoke out on Biden's pro-choice views, stating that Biden should "acknowledge that his view on abortion is contrary to Catholic moral teaching."

SOCIAL TRENDS**Over 20,000 Sign One Million Moms Petition over American Girl Doll with Same-Sex Storyline**

More than 20,000 have signed an online petition with the Christian group One Million Moms asking for Mattel to abandon plans for a story about an American Girl doll and her same-sex married great aunts.

The Christian group One Million Moms launched the petition after The American Girl company



announced its 2021 Girl of the Year doll would be Kira Bailey. In her accompanying book, *Kira Down Under*, Kira visits her great aunts at their animal sanctuary in Australia. The book explains the aunts are married because of changes in the law for same-sex marriage. A statement from One Million Moms called the storyline "unacceptable."

"As Christians, we know that even though something is legalized doesn't make it moral or right," One Million Moms said.

"American Girl could have chosen another storyline or characters to write about and remained neutral in the culture war. American Girl is attempting to desensitize our youth by featuring a storyline with two lesbian aunts." The doll Kira was released in December. She is 10.

"From the beginning, our 'Girl of the Year' characters have been designed to reflect girls' lives today and the realities of the times," Julie Parks, an American Girl spokesperson, told Yahoo Life. "As a brand, ... We're glad to show them that the make-up of one's family doesn't matter – it's still a family and that's all the counts. It's a sentiment we love at American Girl."

LEGAL TRENDS**South Carolina House Passes Heartbeat Bill That Would Ban Most Abortions in the State**

A new pro-life bill that would ban most abortions in the state of South Carolina once a baby's heartbeat is detected has passed in the state's House Chamber.

According to CBN News, almost all of the state's Democratic lawmakers walked out of the house chamber in protest as Republicans voted to pass the measure.

Under the new law, doctors would be required to perform an ultrasound to determine if the fetus has a heartbeat before performing an abortion. While most abortions would be prohibited, certain exemptions would be allowed if the mother's life was in danger or if the cause of pregnancy was from rape or incest. For years, the South Carolina Senate would not pass the bill. Following the 2020 elections, Republicans gained 3 new seats, giving them a 30-16 majority and managed to make the bill Senate Bill No. 1.



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IBC TODAY

#IBCCONNECT2021

When reading over the possible professions for the average American high school student, one is not likely to find listed “preacher,” “missionary,” or “worship leader.” Yet, our world needs men and women committed to His work in the same way that we need Apostolic professionals. Indiana Bible College is committed to training tomorrow’s Apostolic leaders, today. It is this commitment that drives our curriculum. It is this commitment that drives our online marketing. It is this commitment that drives our pledge to leadership, excellence, vision, and integrity. It is also this commitment that drives us to open our doors each year to potential students who are pursuing the call of God on their lives, as it specifically pertains to His Word and kingdom work. Indiana Bible College CONNECT is designed to allow high school junior and senior students the opportunity to experience the practical application of that calling. Students are invited to participate in an in-depth look at what it means to be called into ministry and how Indiana Bible College can help educate, train, and instruct them in that pursuit. This year, IBC CONNECT hosted 100 students on campus. As CONNECT students and parents arrived, they fellowshiped around the student-led coffee bar. The campus was electric with expectation. Beginning even with the orientation meeting, it was evident that God had special plans for the weekend. One family member of a CONNECT student experienced a distinct call to missions during the Information Session on Thursday evening. Classes on Friday were thought-forming. A wide variety of courses happened. In



the Gospel of John course, Academic Dean Rev. Jennifer Mast admonished students, “We have no business in ministry if we are unwilling to say there is right and there is wrong.” Whether the class is Videography, Music Theory, or the History of Apostolic Missions, Truth is the purpose of our educational efforts. Together, our students and staff joined with CONNECT students for a powerful Chapel service. Rev. Jarred Turner preached “The Training of the Heart,” and summarized what IBC aims to do for students called to ministry. That sermon is available for download on the IBC Podcast.

The Worship Studies Concert on Friday night is more than a concert; it is a life-changing service where current students minister to potential students. This year’s concert proved to be no exception. Both IBC students and CONNECT students alike experienced a mighty move of the Holy Ghost. At the end of service, Executive Vice President Rev. Jason Gallion gave an altar call, yielding a genuine response from all present. No doubt, more callings were confirmed at this event, as hearts surrendered to the will of God for their lives and ministries.

The most critical aspect in all of what we do is that the will of God is pursued above all else. We do not merely aim to achieve a mere human connection with potential students. We want them to connect with the will of God for their lives. A weekend like this may not be planned for on a career aptitude test. It may not be accounted for in the schemes of our own human thoughts and understandings. However, IBC CONNECT 2021 truly served to demonstrate to high school juniors and seniors what Indiana Bible College is all about.



CHRIST, CORONAVIRUS, AND THE CROSS

REV. STAN GLEASON | KANSAS CITY, MO

Transcribed by Gregg Stone

But He answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:39-40 NKJV).

Is it just me, or is anyone else suffering from mask fatigue? The dreaded mask has become the symbol of the last twelve months, including COVID-19, sickness, death, loss of loved ones, loss of freedoms, overreach of government, social upheaval, and uncertainty. Is the mask stopping the spread? I truly don't know. Once they were mandated, positive tests spiked. Some haven't worn a mask yet and seem to be doing well. We were all wearing masks at TLC, practicing social distancing, sitting in designated seats, cleaning and sanitizing everything, and we still had forty-three cases of COVID-19 symptoms reported within a few days of each other.

Perhaps this is the first time in history when we have quarantined the healthy? Public officials mandating masks at all levels and around the country have been spotted in public not wearing a mask. We have cooperated with our mayor who asked for the mask, and will do so until he says otherwise. But I can't tell you how many times I have jumped out of my car, walked up to the door of a public building, and suddenly realized I forgot my mask. Back to my car I trudge to retrieve it. I have been scheming how I might destroy all my masks when they are no longer needed. I would like to obliterate them with as much force as possible.

Changed, Perhaps Forever

As pastor, my goal today is to define reality and then do my best to equip so as to enable us to traffic in the reality of where we are in this world, in this culture, and in this pandemic. COVID-19 has impacted the entire world, and the world has changed, perhaps forever. People we know and love have died from its effects. Our society has been turned upside down in the aftermath of this breakout. Medical procedures have been altered, insurance companies are adjusting their policies and premiums. The travel industry has changed, perhaps forever. Some cities, states, and nations require negative tests before reentry, and there is talk of virus visas.

How we do education has changed. Social anxiety is on the rise, mental health professionals will be busier than ever, all kinds of disorders and new conditions will be diagnosed because of COVID-19. Entertainment venues are closed, athletic games in the pros and college are played before empty stadiums. Some businesses and entire franchises have been permanently shut-down. Barna Research reports that: One-third of practicing Christians have stopped going to church, fifty percent of Millennials have stopped watching their church online, and pastors' mental health is at an all-time low.

Questions Abound

Here's what's interesting: Gallup Poll released a study conducted the week of November 15-19, 2020. A question was asked of 1100 adults about their overall mental health. Despite

being a secular poll, results showed that those with the best attitude had been attending weekly worship services. Perhaps this is the first time in church history when a congregation is doing better than their pastor?

We all have questions: Will we shake hands again? Will all social restrictions ever be removed?

Will the powers that be use the pandemic to oppress Christianity, restrict religious freedoms, and overreach into our personal lives even further than what has already been done? Will students get back to their classrooms permanently? Will vaccinations be required? Will the entire church ever regather?

Surviving our Pandemic

On November 8, 2020, an unusual object entered the earth's orbit and came within 31,000 miles of the Earth's surface. It is believed to be part of a Centaur rocket booster from the Surveyor 2 spacecraft. The rocket booster in question was launched in 1966 but never completed its journey. It crash-landed on the moon's surface September of that year. The Centaur booster however sailed passed the moon and disappeared into an unknown orbit about the Sun. It will orbit Earth's atmosphere temporarily but will soon escape again.

What's the point? On March 15, 2020, the Church had its own crash called COVID-19. Our campus closed and I preached to empty seats for eight weeks. Nine months later we are barely back to 75% of our former attendance. There are good people we have not seen since. We were hoping they had a relationship with God and not an address. We don't know where they are, but we know they are out there somewhere, perhaps caught up in another orbit? We pray for your sake you would find your way back into the orbit of the Body of Christ.

There is only one family on the entire Earth who survived the first worldwide pandemic Scripture calls the Flood. How did they do it? They stayed together, worked together, suffered ridicule together, and obeyed God together under their spiritual covering. It was a good time to be in Noah's family. It was a good day to be Noah's wife, his son and his daughter-in-law. Why? Because out of all people on the Earth, only Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

The Church is the only thing in this world is that going to last forever. Corona is not going to last, political parties and the America dream are not going to last. Financial investments, social unrest and social media are not going to last. If you want to make it you will need to make sure you are in the Church: gathering together, worshipping together, working together, praying together, suffering together (more trouble is coming). When the last soul entered the ark, God closed the door, and in view of how long it took to build the ark, the rain soon began to fall.

A Call to Lament

Will we ever know why COVID-19 came? Will we ever know God's purpose for allowing it? Will it ever make sense to us in view of all that we have lost? Let me juxtapose the pandemic with Job's suffering for a moment: Did Job's pain ever make sense to him? Job asked God 181 questions, and then God asked Job 184 questions. Did he ever get a satisfying answer? Are we ever satisfied with the Job saga? I know that God turned his captivity when he prayed for his friends, but was this a lesson Job needed to learn? He ultimately enjoyed more children and prosperity and years of health, but what was his pandemic all about? Did Job die without an explanation?

When we are caught up in awful circumstances, apparent gross injustices, terrible pandemics or plagues, or

when we are accused of wicked things of which we are innocent, or suffer strange sicknesses or strange attacks for no apparent reason... when life doesn't make sense, and our pain appears to have no purpose, what should be our response? Like Job, we are simply called to lament. In times like these we are called to complain and state our case before God, (Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Genesis 18:25)... and then leave it with Him.

Does the Book of Job in some context provide a glimpse of God's envisaging of Himself in flesh? Can we see Him dwelling among us, and the epic battle going on behind the scenes with Satan, being falsely accused, and everything taken from Him, and being stripped, whipped and mocked? Can we see Him forsaken by his own family, friends, and followers, and ultimately utter His forsaken cry: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

I don't pretend to know what God is up to in our present distress, but I do know that we as His children have been called to pray, lament, and trust Him. We have been called to cry out about our losses, our frustrations, and our pain. I lament for what I've lost as a pastor, and I lament for a troubled world my grandchildren are being raised in, and I wonder what upheaval awaits their generation? I weep for my city and God's saints that I serve. I don't understand Him, but I trust Him!

The Only Sign This World Will Ever See

One day when Jesus was asked for a sign from heaven He saw this request as an expression of unbelief. They wanted everything to be obvious and explained. His response was that they had already seen the only sign they were going to get, and they didn't see that. Jonah's life prophetically spoke to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the only sign the world will ever see, and Jesus' three days and nights in the grave followed by His Resurrection is the only sign they will ever need.

In the parable of the vineyard owner (Mark 12) he sent personal messengers to his workers. They murdered every messenger he sent. As a last resort, he sent his own son (thinking he surely would be received), but they killed him too. And now, no more messengers were coming. Jesus Christ has done it all! God doesn't have any more sons to sacrifice, and no more lives to lay down. Jesus Christ is the only One we are going to get, and He is the once-and-for-summons we will ever receive.

The Bible insists that we place Jesus at the center of our picture of the end times. The moment we take our eyes off Him, and

start looking at the world around us, and jumping to conclusions about God and what He might be up to, we may be in danger of forcing an alternative interpretation that may look spiritual and awe inspiring, but tragically paints Jesus out of the picture. We shouldn't need earthquakes, and tsunamis, and hurricanes, and pandemics to turn from idolatry, and injustice and wickedness.



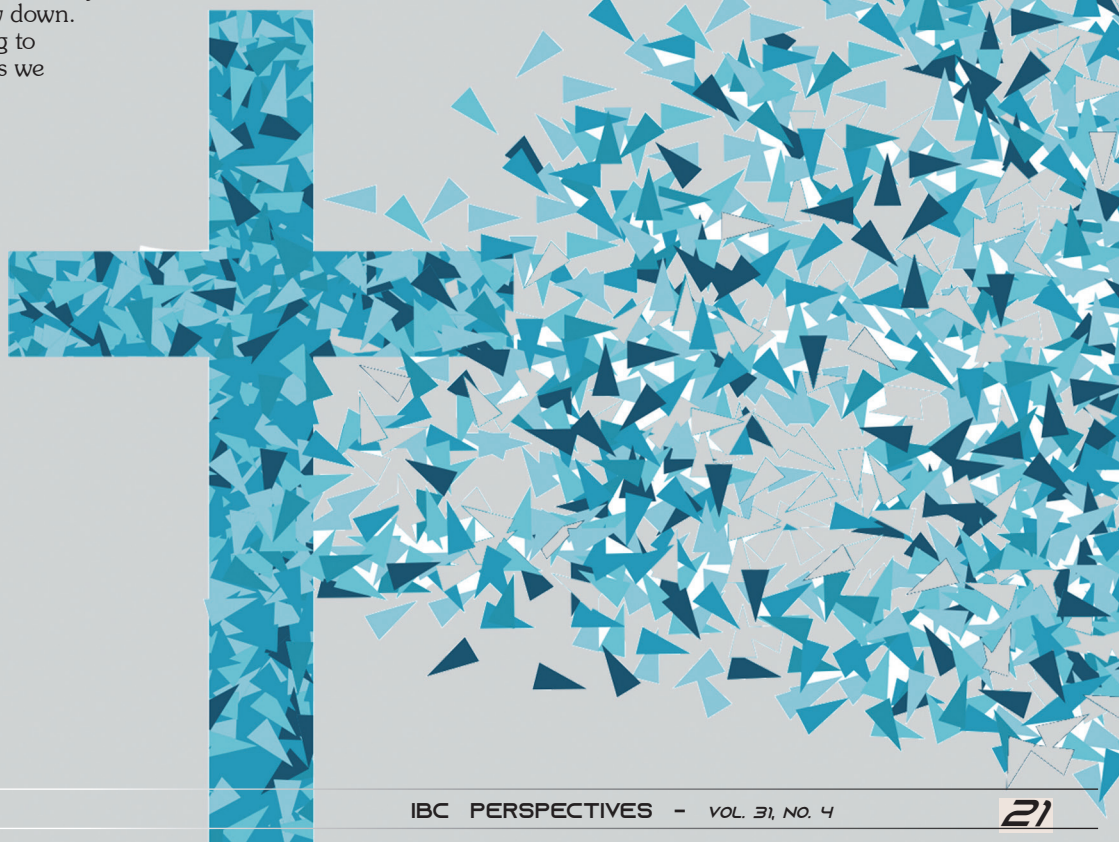
Rev. Stan Gleason
Kansas City, MO

The Power of the Cross

The cross of Christ is all we need to be saved, to be inspired to serve Him, and to be ready for His soon coming. The cross is where all the insanity and injustices of this broken world have been piled up and dealt with. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the sign to the world that God is up to something new, life-changing, and eternal.

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:13-15 NKJV)

Stan Gleason is the Senior Pastor at the Life Church of Kansas City, Missouri. He also serves as the Assistant General Superintendent of the UPCI, West Coast.



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Apostolic Archives International

By Susan Thomas



Gary W. Garrett
Joplin, MO

The Apostolic Archives International Inc. is a historical repository and research center for 20th century Pentecostal history. Founded in 1999, two additional ministries are the Heritage Museum and the Ministerial Hall

of Fame. All three ministries are located in historic, Joplin, Missouri. Dr. Gary W. Garrett is the founder of all three ministries.

"Our motto reveals our mission, Preserving History – Honoring Excellence – Connecting Generations," explains Dr. Gary Garrett. There are several divisions that contain historical data such as photographs, periodicals, an extensive library containing biographies, yearbooks, church history, organizational history, theology, a collection of hand written sermons, a catalog of 500,000 audio and video sermons, a large collection of Apostolic music on LP's. They also transfer old recorded materials from reel-to-reel tapes, cassettes, LP's, wire recordings, and more to digital format. Also, they preserve old 8mm and 16mm film footage to digital format.

The Heritage Museum is an outstanding collection of personal mementos belonging to Apostolic ministers, dating back to the time of the late Bishop G.T. Haywood. Presently, Heritage Museum represents over

one hundred ministers in its endeavor to preserve the legacies of legendary men and women of God, who dedicated their lives to the ministry. Showcases include, suits, shoes, briefcases, Bibles, sermon notes, eyeglasses, hats, walking canes, Clergy robes, pulpits, and much more. "The Heritage Museum is a place where memories never die," states Dr. Garrett.

The Ministerial Hall of Fame is a part of the museum where Apostolic ministers are rewarded double honor through induction into the prestigious Hall of Fame. "It is our way of connecting generations," states Dr. Garrett. "Presently, sixty-six ministers have been honored with induction. Each minister has a plaque with his/her picture transposed onto a brass plate, mounted on the plaque along with their name and the year of the class they represent."

If you want to access the museum for research, you can do so by going to the website (www.apostolicarchives.com) which contains many of the projects including access to purchase materials from the audio and video catalogs. There is also a Facebook page for each of the three divisions, which can be accessed for further information and virtual tours. These pages are named: Apostolic Archives International, Apostolic Ministerial Hall of Fame, and Apostolic Heritage Museum.

Dr. Garrett is continually looking for materials to expand the museum. "We

are looking for materials such as historical documents, photographs, recordings, periodicals, minister's diaries, yearbooks, biographies, newspaper articles, ministerial credentials, and personal belongings of Apostolic ministers," informs Dr. Garrett.

For the past 21 years Dr. Garrett and his wife Deborah have self-funded the entire project. But with mounting expenses and a need for expansion outside help has become inevitable. They do receive financial donations which can be easily made on the website.

Normally there are posted hours of operation, but during the Covid 19 pandemic, they ask that tours be made by appointment only. To schedule a tour please call (417) 291-1667.

The Apostolic Archives International Inc. has a board of directors, including, ambassadors and representatives that serve the organization. For more information you may contact them through the website at: www.apostolicarchives.com or by email at: drgarywgarrett@yahoo.com or by calling/texting our office at: (417) 291-1667.



Loss of a Child

By Susan Thomas



Steve Wilson
Potts Camp, MS

Bro. Steve Wilson of Potts Camp, Mississippi, was only one-year old when his Dad, Bro. J. Frank Wilson moved to Potts Camp to pastor the Bethlehem Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. "My tenure serving this church began in 1968, as Assistant Pastor, Asso-

ciate Pastor, Pastor and then Senior Pastor. I retired as Bishop of the church in 2009," states Bro. Wilson.

"My wife and I suffered a tragic loss of our only son June 13, 1999. He was an alumnus of Indiana Bible College and had returned home and served one year as youth pastor when the Lord called him home in a drowning accident. Needless to say, this was the trial of our lifetime. The untimely death of a child is an experience that will let you know what you really believe about God and the degree of his intervention in life. Ten days after the loss of our son, I was elected General Superintendent of the Assemblies of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was a very dif-

ficult time in our journey," said Bro. Wilson.

"After about ten years had passed, and still struggling in grief, we decided we could not afford to "waste our storm." The best way to heal was reaching out to others that were suffering as we were. We believe the Lord inspired us to begin an ANNUAL LOSS OF CHILD RETREAT and a network for those that were on the same journey as ours. Our network reaches out to parents who have lost children and sends them care packages, thoughtful gifts, books, and network information, Bro. Wilson adds. "Once a year we gather together in an informal retreat and help each other as we share our stories, get to know each other and divulge our fears, hurts and disappointment in losing our child or children. The loss of a child is the most profound grief of all hurts—there's simply no words to describe it. It is so necessary for these parents to feel they have somewhere to go, talk, and know they are understood and no one is judging them in the way they are grieving."

It's so easy to ignore a parent in grief because most people just don't know what to say.

What you say is not nearly as important as just being beside them, expressing your love, concern and prayer for them. Most of the time, just being there not saying a word and letting them know they are in your prayers is the compassion they need at the time.

"We have seen such great results from our retreats. Couples come broken, weeping and grieving, and many leave smiling and feeling like "I can make it through this."

The retreat is annually in March or April. It begins on a Saturday evening and goes until Monday morning. For ten years it has been at Whitestone Country Inn, Kingston, Tennessee. This past year it was to be in Branson, Missouri, but was cancelled due to Covid 19. It is scheduled to be at Whitestone Country Inn again this year on March 13th and 14th, 2021," informs Bro. Wilson.

If you have questions about the network, you may contact Bro. Wilson at 662-551-8024 or snpwlsm@aol.com or the Secretary, Annette Curton at 574-304-7210 or acurton5@gmail.com.



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Word To The Wise:

"The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him... but because he loves what is behind him." - G. K. Chesterton

Old Sam Johnson goes to his doctor complaining of aches and pains all over his body. After a thorough examination, the doctor gives him a clean bill of health.

"Sam, you're in excellent shape for an 85-year-old man. But I'm not a magician - I can't make you any younger," says the doctor.

"Who asked you to make me younger?" says Sam with a smile. "I just want you to make sure I get older!"

* * * * *

Joan: Herb, if you don't stop snoring, I'm going to toss you out on your ear!

Herb: Does it upset you that much?

Joan: Not just me, the entire congregation.



"Which weather app are you using? Mine is forecasting a plague of locusts and scattered showers of fire and brimstone."

* * * * *

Last October, my wife bought a magnolia tree from the local nursery, but after only a few weeks the leaves shriveled. It appeared to be on its last leg.

My wife took some leaf samples and marched into the nursery to demand an explanation.

"I know exactly what's wrong with your magnolia," said the manager.

"Good," said my wife. "What's it suffering from?"

"Autumn," he replied.

* * * * *

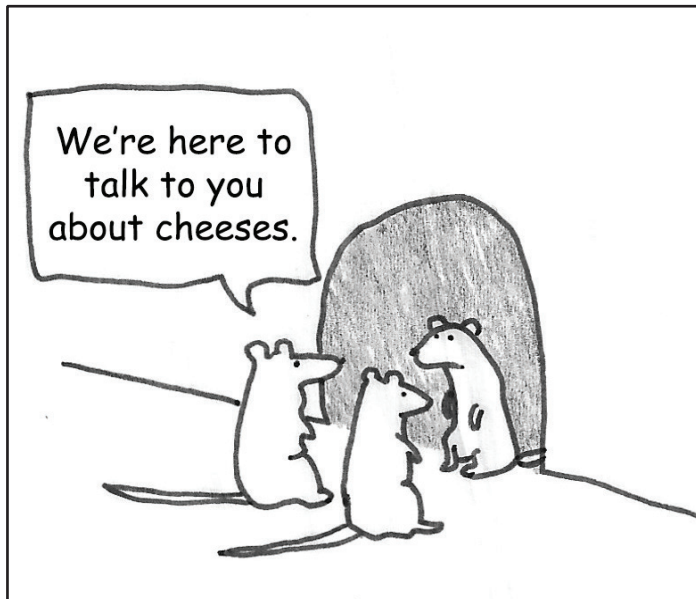
On a balmy day in New York, four pastors swapped their suits and ties for polos, khakis, and a round of golf.

After several really horrible shots, their caddy asked, "You guys wouldn't be preachers by any chance?"

"Actually, yes, we are," one minister replied. "How did you know?"

"Easy," said the caddy. "I've never seen such bad golf and such clean language!"

* * * * *



Church mice.

* * * * *

A minister was planning a wedding at the close of the Sunday morning service.

After the benediction, he had planned to call the couple down for a brief ceremony in front of the congregation.

For the life of him, he couldn't think of the names of those who were to be married.

"Will those wanting to get married please come to the front?" he requested.

Immediately, nine single ladies, six single men, three widows, and four widowers stepped to the front.

* * * * *

The seven-year old told her mom that a little boy in her class asked her to play doctor.

"Oh, dear," the mother nervously sighed. "What happened, honey?"

"Nothing, he made me wait forty-five minutes and then double-billed the insurance company."



"Remind me never to ask the youth group to help fold the church bulletins again."



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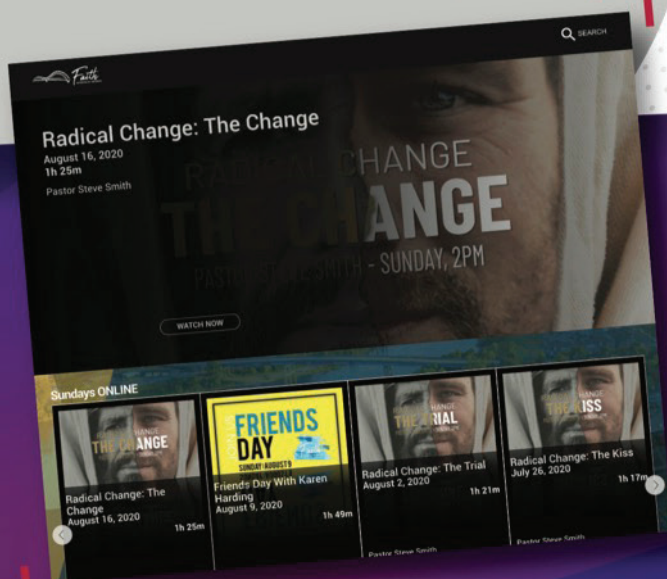
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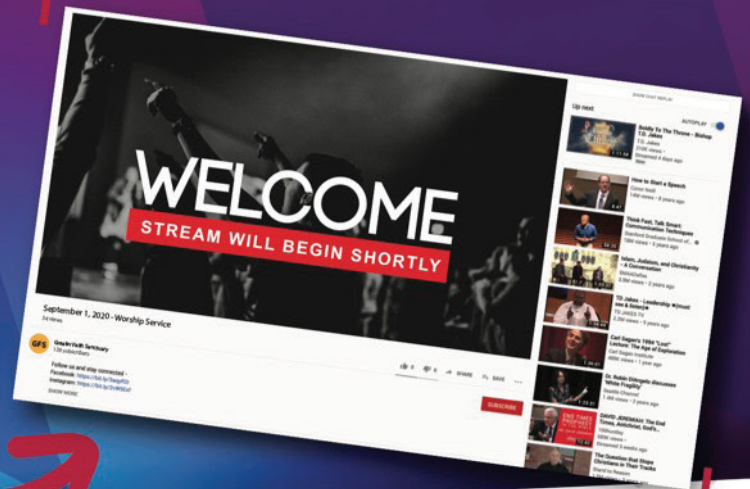
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