



FORWARD

It's About Honor, Not Balance

"And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God" (II Sam 6:6-7).

When we were young, my siblings and I loved going to my grandparents' house in Marion, Illinois. Going to grandma and grandpa's house meant cookouts, pallets on the floor with cartoons, and most importantly, foraging through all the treasures in the garage and basement. That old basement had a pool table and a separate living space that made it feel otherworldly for us kids. When the boredom of billiards would settle in, we would head to the garage and rummage through grandma and grandpa's golf clubs. My grandparents were both scratch golfers, so we didn't dare mess with their clubs (well, not after the tongue-lashing of the first time). However, like most consistent players, they kept an extra bag each from an older set of clubs that we were allowed to play with. Inevitably, we would drag an extra set out into the yard to swing feverishly at the gum-balls which fell from the American Sweetgum trees in the front or back yard. The spiked fruit, when struck just right with a five-iron, could bring my older brother to his knees. Those were the days! Although I'm not sure how patient either one of them were with others, they routinely exercised longsuffering with our shenanigans and intrusive behavior during visits. For example, pull all the sheets off of the bed for a fort? "That sounds like fun." How about jumping the cue ball to make that make that unrealistic shot in the corner pocket? "Sure, good luck." Do you care if we turn Sweetgum fruit into tiny spiked missiles? "Well, just be careful."

While I could get away with almost anything at my grandparents, there was a singular two-foot by five-foot piece of furniture that I dared not to touch. My grandmother's coffee table stayed too polished to hardly hold paper; if the surface had not been absolutely flat, anything placed on it would have slid off the frictionless surface. There were two openings on each end of the coffee table that looked like perfect areas to army crawl through, but they were completely off-limits. If my grandmother even caught me breathing too heavily near that table my full name would be called as a reprimand. Now, thirty years later, that piece of furniture is still in pristine condition.

Around the holidays a couple years ago, my wife and I took my kids for a visit to see my strong but aging grandmother. Standing in the living room, my heart skipped a beat when I looked over to see my youngest playing on the coffee table! That same feeling of trepidation from decades before found me. At warp speed the thoughts raced through my mind, understanding that when my grandmother walked in from the other room, my youngest son would be in serious trouble. However, that's when I realized she was there, in the corner of that room in her chair, just watching him play. Instinctively, my supposition was that she needed to correct him... until it hit me: for her, she's too tired to care anymore. Without any further hesitation I barked at my son, "we don't play on that coffee table." Grandma just looked at me, with decades of decisions in her eyes, and smiled appreciatively as she acknowledged that intrinsic value had been passed on to me.

On more than one occasion I've found myself in a half-smile after overhearing a question similar to the following: "Did Uzzah really deserve such a harsh punishment?" From there, I know that a conversation is soon to unfold about whether or not his death was justifiable. How humorous to consider God's actions would need justification by the arguments of today's young adult. How impervious our thought process can be if we only use a twenty-first century lens to consider timeless truths of the text. There was a multitude of issues with how they chose to move the Ark of God that day, but Uzzah casually assuming that he could bring balance to God crossed a serious line of disrespect.

Easily illustratable by even a cursory glance at any type of media, it is obvious that what was once spiritually sacred has lost value for many. The net of debauchery and the sting of secularism that has swayed the actions of many so-called Christians in the world is staggering. As a pastor and Bible college president, I find myself indebted to the heroes of faith that preached, taught, and challenged my generation to honor and reverence the sacredness of Scripture. May God grant us the wisdom, strength and boldness needed to live unwavering in this unsteady hour.



**PRESIDENT
JOSHUA B. CARSON**

"As a pastor and Bible college president, I find myself indebted to the heroes of faith that preached, taught, and challenged my generation to honor and reverence the sacredness of Scripture."



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♦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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GUEST PULPIT: Forward - Cortt Chavis

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BEREAVEMENT COUNSELING:

Bearing One Another's Burdens

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.



Stanley Jones, Philadelphia, MS - As funeral directors, we were taught not to show emotions. As a pastor, though, you can't help but feel emotions. The saints are your children, and they are hurting. When some members transitioned, I refused to embalm them because of my emotional ties with them. Sometimes I won't even go to the funeral home because I don't want to see the body until the time of the actual service.

When there have been crime victims, it is best not to address the incident. I prefer not to dwell on that too much or preach about the victim or the one who did the shooting. I preached a service for the victim of a murder/suicide without mentioning the name because emotions run high when you preach on the victim. I can preach a whole message and never mention the person. The best thing we can do is preach Jesus.

One of the main things a minister should not do is give false hope. Saying things like "I can see them in glory looking over the banisters of Heaven." That's one thing as a young pastor I had to learn the hard way. I've told our congregation that every day we actually preach our own funeral.

Consoling the bereaved calls for using Scriptures of comfort as well as personal experiences. I always use Scriptures when it comes to counseling the saints because saints are actually Bible-taught people.

I think every pastor should read the book, *Maybe Dying Isn't All That Bad*, written by Bishop John Fonzer at least twice. It is an excellent book. *Thanks, Death, You Did Me a Favor* by Bishop Clifton Jones is also a great read.



Gregg Joki, Tulsa, OK - I simply tell the bereaved I'm available and that I'm praying for them. I never tell them I know how they feel because obviously, I don't.

People that have come under hospice have already accepted the fact that they are dying. In my hospice chaplain work, I have to be open-minded with clients. I can't use doctrine. I use the Scripture that to be absent from the body [is to] be present with the Lord. I tell people I believe when they draw their last breath they are in the presence of the Lord. Even if they are a horrible sinner, God is ultimately the final Judge.

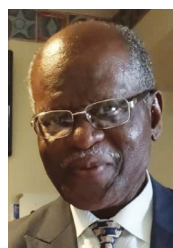
In hospice work, we have people dying every day. We wait a couple of days to call the family and we offer bereavement care for thirteen months. The reason we offer it for thirteen months is that it assures that they get through every anniversary and birthday.



Randy Blizzard, Las Vegas, NV - One lesson learned early on in my ministry is that each person deals with loss differently and there is no timeline for bereavement. It does help to have a close family or supportive friends and a great church, but you must avail yourself to the help that is offered, and often, people want to suffer in silence. As a pastor, you have to watch for that one who is often silent.

When you are dealing with someone who does not have much time to live, you must be gentle and let them learn to trust you. Let them know that you are there to help them offload any fears or guilt they are wrestling with as they face the end of life. Helping a person feel safe to open up to you and know that you will keep it confidential and that you can guide them into a prayer of repentance and forgiveness is a powerful and wonderful thing. We have baptized several and they have received the Holy Ghost just days or weeks before their death.

I sometimes ask them if they have any regrets, and lastly, if they have anything left on their bucket list they have not done and would like to do. One lady told me she regretted never using the fine china her husband had given her on their 25th anniversary, and she now realized that she should have not waited for a special guest but wished she had made a special meal for her family to eat on the china. I surprised her with a special dinner two days later with her family. They ate on that china and she cried with joy.



Wendell Chinn, Indianapolis, IN - I recommend reading *On Death and Dying*, by Elizabeth Ross; *I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye*, by Brook Noel; and *A Beginner's Guide to the End*, by B.J. Miller.

Listen. Those in bereavement desire someone to listen to them and not pass judgment as they listen. Listening spans generations and cultures. Pray and plan the grief encounter spiritually, emotionally, and financially before you meet those being in counseling. For long-term counseling, refer them to a Christian grief counselor.

When the person is unsaved, give them assurance that God is just and share with them their need for repentance before Him. If the person knows they are dying, emphasis should be on God's care for their soul and His ability to care for their loved ones after they have died.

Imagine it is you receiving the bereavement counseling, what it is you do and do not desire to be said. Walk in your own experiences, be open and transparent. Above all, if you have not been healed, don't try to heal others. Your spirit will bleed through.

HOPE ON THE HORIZON

Rev. Jason McGhee | Burton, MI

Written By Charlotte L. Pound



Pastor and First Lady McGhee

South Flint Tabernacle is a dynamic, Spirit-filled church that is undergirded by prayer and the Word of God. Its purpose is to win and mentor disciples by exalting Jesus, encouraging people, equipping Christians, and evangelizing the world.

Rev. Jason R. McGhee and his wife Jerusha pastor this thriving revival church in Burton, Michigan. They have two children, Jade (21) and Jason "JJ" (14). Bro. McGhee has served as the Michigan District Multicultural Director, and currently he and

Sis. McGhee have the honor to serve as the Michigan District Hospitality Coordinators.

Revival Begins With Relationship

Pastor Jason McGhee of South Flint Tabernacle (SFT) believes that growth and revival must start with a relationship with God and prayer. "It is often said that people don't care what you know until they know how much you care. We believe that sowing the seed of revival is about building relationships with others. Growth is not just about a one-time experience at the church, but a lifestyle change. People are leaving their communities and, in some cases, even being cast out by their families for making a lifestyle change. The church needs to be there for them so that they feel God's love and have a support system to uphold them. I feel that if you create this environment you will see growth and revival, and not just in numbers. I believe that it is a priority for the pastor to cast a vision for a church and do all he can to fulfill that vision. A pastor can be a leader in ministering, reaching, and discipling. Taking time to show love and care will create the environment for leaders to follow, and it will also allow for growth," he said.



Helping the Community

Creating Excitement for Involvement

SFT has numerous departments and ministries. Directors/leaders are given job descriptions and they turn in reports after each event that they lead. There is a yearly planning meeting, as well as a quarterly checkup. "We try to put a focus on volunteering in ministry at SFT. We strive to create

an atmosphere where people want to be involved and are excited about it," Pastor McGhee said.

SFT estimates that at least 65% of the saints are involved in some form of ministry. Pastoral leadership is in communication with department heads & ministry leaders weekly. The training materials used are vast: books, guest speakers, and special training lessons, many of which have been written by their Bishop, Robert E Henson.



Hungry Hearts for God at the Altar

Comprehensive Ministries and Departments

Entry-Level Ministry; Music Ministry (MM) – Choir; MM – Musicians; MM - Praise Singing; MM – Groups; MM - Worship Leading; MM - Children's choir; Sunday School Dept; Sunday School Choir; Daystar Childcare Center; Children's Ministry-Super Church; CM-Kidz Bible Study; Bus Ministry; Arise Ministry; Arise Choir; Arise Drama/Sign Team; Home Friendship Groups/Small Groups; Ushers; Greeters; Security; Medical Team; Attendance; ARK/NET (Altar Record Keepers / Newborn Edification Team); ACTS Ministry; Marriage Enrichment Ministry; Mentoring Men's Ministry; Ministry Discovery Class; Ladies' Ministry - Bake Sales; LM - Church Dinners; LM - Funeral Dinners; LM - Ladies Care Team; LM- Parties/Teas/Banquets; LM – Decorating; ICE Ministry; Care Ministry – Hospital Visitation; Care Ministry – Shut-in Visitation; Compassion Ministry; Diamonettes; SFT Scroll; Multi-Media – Sound; Multi-Media – Projection; Multi-Media – Cameras; Media Sales Booth; Holy Grounds; Home Bible Study Ministry; Hyphen; Prayer Ministry; Follow-up Ministry; Jail Ministry; Church Lock-up; Community Clean-up; New Life Discipleship Class; Kidz Doctrinal Training; Hosting Ministry; Clothes Closet; Food Distribution

A Miracle-Working God

"God has been so good to SFT and is blessing our efforts in Drive-Through-Prayer.

We have actually had a few people get the Holy Ghost through our Drive-Through Prayer effort.

One gentleman was contemplating suicide and felt hopeless. He saw our Drive-Through-Prayer event going on and pulled his



car in. After some time of prayer and conversation, God filled him with the precious gift of the Holy Ghost. He was later baptized in Jesus' name as well.

"During the pandemic, we were able to provide over 150 meals for some of our community members as well as My Brother's Keeper, a homeless shelter for men and veterans in the Flint area. We were able to do this on Thanksgiving Day. We have created "hope bags" for the homeless of our area. We also provided lunches for many of the police departments in our community as well as the front-line workers at our local hospitals," he said.

Seeing Potential in All People

"People need hope. My philosophy of ministry is to see the potential of people even when they can't see it themselves. I enjoy preaching on salvation and the life-transforming power of God," Pastor McGhee said.

Growing and Building

"We are a brick-and-mortar building. We currently take up a whole city block. We started off as a small building and the Lord has blessed us. We were able to add on and we now have a large sanctuary that can seat close to 650 people.

"The Lord has blessed us with a growing revival, and we are currently in a building project. We also have additional property about a mile down from our current church building where we have laid the foundation for our new church building. On that same property, we have a beautiful gymnasium that we use for multiple purposes, including our catering business. This property is also the home to our growing Daystar Child Care Center. Even in the middle of a pandemic, the Lord has blessed SFT with an ever-growing Sunday congregation and we are looking forward to being in our new building according to God's perfect timing," he said.



Pastor McGhee Preaching

was a beautiful blessing that God gave me that very special moment in my ministry," he said.

Ninety Years of Growth

South Flint Tabernacle was founded by the Rev. William McLaughlin in March of 1931. The church originally met in the two-story wooden schoolhouse known as Lincoln School. The Rev. Albert A. Abbey became the pastor a few months later. As the church grew, in the Fall of 1934, the church purchased a property and started construction on a new building. It was located at the corner of James and South Saginaw Streets, in Burton, Michigan.



A Convert is Baptized

Calling and Confirmation

Pastor McGhee grew up in the beautiful state of Alabama. He was taken to church from an early age by his God-fearing mother. He received the Holy Ghost and was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ as a young man. Pastor McGhee received his calling as a young boy and carried it with him until adulthood. "I was granted ministerial license with the Michigan District UPCI and the first person I baptized was my father, for whom my mother and I had prayed for so many years. It

The Rev. Herbert Ervin served as pastor from 1967 to October of 1970. In 1971, Rev. Arthur Pruett became the pastor. Rev. Nathaniel J. Wilson served as pastor from 1973 to 1979. In 1976, they started the construction of what is now the current sanctuary. Then, Rev. Robert E. Henson and his family accepted the pastorate of South Flint Tabernacle from October of 1979 to 2016. In 2016 he was voted in as Bishop and currently remains in this position. In October 2016, Jason R. McGhee was voted in and continues to serve as pastor.

"I believe that the Church's solid Bible teaching and preaching is one major reason for the continuing growth of the church. In an endeavor to encourage community participation, the church offers free home Bible studies and places a strong emphasis on discipleship.

South Flint Tabernacle has become known as a flagship congregation in the worldwide fellowship of the United Pentecostal Church International. The church [celebrated] the 90th Anniversary in April 2021," he said.

Some of the special community events sponsored by South Flint Tabernacle include: Back the Badge Sunday (Honoring Police, Fire, and EMS personnel), Baker College Sunday, Blessing of the Bikers, Support Our Troops Day, Hope Bag Distribution, Food Giveaway, and Project HOPE.

South Flint Tabernacle is now the mother church for a group called C.O.H. – "Celebrating Our Heritage" – where many of the churches' pastors or wives have come out of SFT. The C.O.H. family meets four times per year to strengthen each other. The largest one is in May each year and includes all thirteen churches.

Personal Details and How to Contact

"For leisure, I enjoy playing basketball with my son and going on walks with my family. I enjoy listening to sermons from many different preachers. I am Native American and belong to the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. I am thankful for that heritage. My favorite books to read are on Jewish commentary," he said.

If you would like any more information about the South Flint church, you may contact them through their website: www.southflint.org. Office Number: 810-743-1710. Fax Number: 810-743-9591. Pastor's Email: jrm@southflint.org. Sis. McGhee's Email: Ladymcghee@southflint.org.



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-Timothy Richmond, Project Equip Student

“It has been such an honour to be a part of Project Equip. Having completed Missiology and now beginning courses in Discipleship, I continue to be challenged in every area of my life and ministry. It’s amazing how ministry becomes a natural extension of who God calls us to be when we have a right understanding of His mission. Everywhere we go, every conversation we have, every plan we make, we are always an on-mission people. This changes everything. It means that God’s mission is not exclusively reserved for a select few. If you are a believer, then you have been given a mission. You have become a part of God’s mission to be reconciled to the world.”

- Latoya Duggins, Project Equip Student

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5. Donate Your Vehicle - TCM is partnered with CARS (a 501(c)(3) nonprofit) at careasy.org, to accept the donation of your vehicle.

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Rev. Matthew Buckland - Missionary to the Czech Republic

Interviewed By William Turner



Matthew Buckland

Missionary Matthew Buckland, a 2001 graduate of Indiana Bible College (IBC), faces some unusual challenges in directing his own Bible college program in the Central European Czech Republic. Take, for example, the unusual research paper turned in by one of his students who happens to hold a PhD in Physics and Chemistry.

Ministering to the Well-Educated

"I was teaching a unit on apologetics to our students," Brother Buckland said, "and gave them an assignment to give a brief proof of God without using the Bible, but instead utilizing one of the various philosophical or scientific proofs." The

unusual paper that particular student turned in, he said, "was a five-page chemical reaction."

Brother Buckland went to his student to ask, "What am I looking at?" He told me that it was a chemical reaction he had discovered that should not be possible in the natural world. He said it was through observing this reaction that he realized there must be something greater than us."

The large number of well-educated adults in Prague, paradoxically coupled with a high degree of Biblical ignorance in one of the most secular and atheistic populations of Europe, means Matthew Buckland and his wife, Angie, must take a different approach to evangelism and discipling.

"This changes our starting point for witnessing," he said, "and creates a massive learning curve for new converts, as they are coming from an almost entirely secular background with no biblical/Christian foundation whatsoever."

Preparation From an Early Age

Introduced by a mutual friend, Matthew Buckland met his wife, Angie, while he was a student at IBC and she was a student at Butler University in Indianapolis. They have been married for 17 years and have two sons: Grant, fourteen, and Pierce, seven. His advice to new missionaries with children is, "Recognize that your family is your number-one priority."

Bro. Buckland, son of Global Missions Pacific Regional Director Roger Buckland and his wife, Becky, was raised on the mission field himself. He was five years old when his parents were appointed to the Philippines. Later, they were the pioneer missionaries to the Czech Republic, beginning the work there not long after the fall of communism.

His American, Philippine, and Czech experiences have helped give him a "greater depth of understanding of the way people act and interact. It helps you realize the role a person's culture has in influencing the way they view the world around them."

Language proficiency has helped him and his wife gain acceptance in the Czech culture. Still, he observed, "no matter how well-accepted you are, there will always be a level at which you are still an outsider. The role of a missionary is to lessen that gap as much as is humanly possible and to integrate and become conversant with the culture of your nation."

His years at IBC played a special part in his preparation for ministry, Brother Buckland said. "It was in a Tuesday night student body prayer that I received my calling to ministry and I will never forget that evening." The friendships he gained at IBC have continued through the years. "The friendships I made during my time at school have been some of my closest relationships in ministry to this day. Anywhere I go in the world, I am just a phone call away from support."

His formal education did not stop at IBC. "I decided to continue my education because a desire for more was birthed within me at IBC." He went on to earn a Masters Degree at Urshan Graduate School of Theology.

Next Steps and Beyond

What would he advise those planning to become involved in global missions through Associates in Missions or Next Steps assignments?

"Glean as much as you can from your host/overseeing missionary. Recognize that you do not go in and change the world overnight. There is a learning curve to becoming effective in ministry in a foreign culture. Take time to learn and recognize the process involved with that learning. Recognize that you will have to adapt to the location where you are working, and not the other way around."

The role of a missionary, he said, "is to facilitate growth while maintaining doctrinal integrity. We are called to build a biblical church, not a North American church, and if you are going to be involved in building something that lasts, it will take time. God often changes us more than we change the place where we are called."

Brother Buckland serves as superintendent of the work in the Czech Republic, and instructor and administrator of a Bible college connected with the Global Association of Theological Studies (GATS), a vital part of raising up national ministers and establishing preaching points throughout the country. He is also a regular teacher in Bible colleges in Serbia, Slovakia, Austria, and Scotland.



MARK 4:35-41

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RHYTHM:

PATTERNS, PROGRESS, PRODUCTIVITY

Interviewed By Gregg Stone



Eugene Wilson
Katy, TX

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

I have served in pastoral ministry for over thirty years, including as senior pastor. I am also an adjunct professor, as well as a traveling speaker, focusing primarily on leadership development. Finally, I am the founder and executive chairman of

Equipping Leaders, a nonprofit coaching and consulting organization.

Tell us about your book, *Rhythm*. Why did you write it?

Rhythm is an outflow of a personal growth endeavor. I wondered, “Can I better organize and structure my life as to not only achieve more things (God-given desires) but also to establish better margins (i.e., God’s plan also includes rest)?” I then thought, “Perhaps there are others who are interested in the same thing. Maybe I should turn what I discover into a book.” And that’s precisely what I did.

How is this book different from your previous one, *Rodentivity*?

Most of us have goals and dreams that we would like to see come to fruition. Yet there are so many things demanding our attention that we struggle in creating space to turn them into realities. Hence, *Rodentivity* addressed the erroneous mindset that to be busy is to be productive, which is not true. We can be busy but going nowhere of great importance, much like a rodent on a running wheel. *Rhythm* comes alongside *Rodentivity* and says, “Now that you clearly understand your purpose and are committed to rid yourself of mere busyness, here are some practical ways in which you can be most productive.”

What do you mean by having “Rhythm” in your life?

Rhythm is defined as a pattern of beats; it is about movement. It has also been defined as “variation marked by the regular recurrence or natural flow of related elements.” It is found in Creation. It is found in Solomon’s remarks concerning times and seasons. Thus, when I speak of rhythm, I am talking about creating a beat to life whereby a person can successfully maneuver through the ebbs and flows of life. It is about achieving progress in a balanced manner; movement that yields results without unnecessary stress or burden.

What are the danger signals that a person desperately needs rhythm?

Some signs in which there is a need for rhythm are burnout, unhealthy or decaying relationships, extreme busyness, and so on. For the over-achiever, a danger signal is often the inability to slow down, to rest. For the under-achiever, it is often the failure to achieve stick-to-it-ness, to endure long enough to achieve substantial results. For most people, the lack of rhythm is revealed in their struggles to reach their goals, to turn dreams into realities.

How can Rhythm help you to accomplish more, to reach your goals and fulfill your dreams?

We live in a busy world that seems to be getting busier. For the person who desires to experience forward movement in accomplishing big and audacious goals, to see dreams come to fruition, the struggle is real. We think, “How can I do this when I have so little time as it is?” Yet there is a way. *Rhythm* was written with such a person in mind, the author as well as others. Rhythm can help a person create balance; it can help a person achieve the highest functionality in a specified allotment of time.

What can a person do to create balance and rhythm?

There are many things a person can do to create balance and rhythm. Some of them are centered around a change of mindset. Many of them are simple “tools of the trade” of which productivity gurus have long understood. And what is especially exciting is that they work for others, too. Here are just a few.

(1) Create a fixed week. Regardless of what may lie outside of our control, there is much of which we do control, even if it is a few hours in the morning or evening. To best optimize this time, consider creating themed days. For example, I strongly dislike administrative work; it is not my gifting. However, Tuesdays have become one of my most productive days. It is a day set aside for administrative purposes. Having a fixed week, made up of multiple themed days, has helped me to better organize my activities. This includes enhancing my focus with necessary things, even though I am not as passionate about them as I am with other things.

(2) Refuse to be held captive to technology. For many, this involves

managing one’s notifications. If your smartphone notifies you of every text message, and you keep nearby at all times, you likely struggle to maintain rhythm. So, do this: turn off your notifications. Place your phone on airplane mode for thirty minutes of deep, focused work. If you must, turn it on for five minutes, to check missed calls and messages, then quickly place it back on airplane mode for another thirty minutes of focused work. You might be surprised at what happens—you will accomplish more when you control your environment as opposed to allowing your environment to control you. I address this in greater detail in *Rhythm*, in sharing the “Pomodoro Technique.”

(3) Stop multitasking. We think we are making progress when we multitask. The reality is that we are just switching back and forth between activities or tasks. This activity is deceiving. While we think we are being productive, we are actually wasting time, up to forty percent of productivity. Consequently, due to multitasking, things that could have been accomplished quicker take longer, and things that could have been achieved easier are harder.

Can you share some success stories of how these principles have helped you and others?

I have witnessed church leaders and business people achieve greater things while getting their lives back. They contribute much of their success to the application of simple insights, things that help to free one’s brain to function at its fullest capacity. I share a story in *Rhythm* in which a business coach and consultant taught me how to use a simple yet highly beneficial system that freed my brain (he called the brain “a tool”) so that it could function at a much higher level of performance. I use it daily.

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

Absolutely. Email me at info@equippingleaders.net.

Please share some information on how to order, cost, etc.

Rhythm, along with my other books, can be purchased through the Pentecostal Publishing House. You can also find the ebook version on Amazon.

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	SPEAKERS / NOTES	CONTACT / INFO
JUNE 4-8	Arkansas International Campmeeting A conference where Apostolic doctrine is not only preached but embraced. The message of Acts 2:38 remains the same!	Registration will be opening soon; location to be announced at that time.	Jesse Galindo, Wesley Jackson, Joel McCoy, Nathaniel Urshan, Joel Holmes, Matt Tuttle	Visit https://www.fpcnlr.com/arim for more information.
JULY 23-27	North American Bible Quizzing Tournament PCI Youth Ministries will submit the list of BQE-qualifying teams to the hotel (an initial maximum of 4 rooms/team). The host hotel will contact teams for specific rooming and payment information.	Location TBD	Speakers for devotions and services will be announced closer to the event date.	Visit www.seniorbible-quizzing.com for more information.
JULY 28-30	North American Youth Congress The world's largest apostolic youth event, filled with dynamic preaching, singing, and fellowship.	This event will now be hosted online.	Michael Thomas, Jerry Jones, Victor Jackson, Amado Huizar, Adam Shaw, and many more.	For more information: www.northamericanyouthcongress.com
AUG 29	Move the Mission Offering Due Date 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.
AUG 31- SEPT 2	The Movement Conference The Movement Conference is created for pastors and their church leadership teams who are pursuing the missions model of multiplication.	First Apostolic Church 1331 William Blount Dr. Maryville, TN 37801	Kenneth Carpenter, Timothy Lee, Matthew Ball, JH Osborne, Jimmy Toney, Raymond Woodward, David Poole, Aaron Bounds, Sam Emory	Visit www.livethemovement.org for more information.
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	Joshua B. Carson, Doug White, Gary Keller, Aaron & Cindy Bounds, Tim & Stacy Gaddy, Jason & Valerie Staten, Scott Graham, James Wilson, Wayne Huntley	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	Visit www.upciyouth.com/events for more information.000
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.
OCT 20-23	Winds Conference A conference with a powerful apostolic atmosphere to empower and equip young ministers and millennials.	East Wind Pentecostal Church 1021 Emerson Dr. NE Palm Bay, FL 32907	Jerry Jones, Victor Jackson, Josh Carson, Aaron Bounds, Mark Brown, Joel Urshan, and many more.	Visit www.WindsConference.com for more information.
Nov 1	AYC Online Applications Available Apostolic Youth Corps is a branch of UPCI Youth Ministries.	Destinations will be announced closer to the event date.	AYC North American trips are open to applicants 15-35 years of age.	Visit www.apostolicyouthcorps.com for more information.
NOV 12-13	Chicagoland Men's Conference Our goal is to continue to be a meeting men can gather from all over our fellowship to be strengthened, renewed, inspired, blessed, and be better men and stronger men.	Family Harvest Church 18500 92nd Ave. Tinley Park, IL 60487	Speakers for this conference will be announced closer to the event date.	Visit www.chicagolandmensconference.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.christmasforchrist.faith for more information.

Church Today: The Family of God



Jason Gallion

Church Today

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The Family of God

The Bible talks about something very emphatically, and that is the fact that we are a family. If we look in Matthew, the 5th and 6th chapters, they emphasize who we are as a family.

The principle of family is absolutely established in these passages.

The principle of calling one another "Brother" and "Sister" is pretty profound. That is because we are brothers and sisters in Christ. If you look to the right and the left in the body of Christ, whether you like them or not, that is your brother and your sister. We look at Matthew 5:16 - "glorify your Father which is in heaven;" Matthew 5:45 - "that they may be the children of your father;" Matthew 5:48 - "be therefore perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven is perfect."

Every time that you look at someone and call them your brother or your sister, do you know what you're reminding yourself of? You are reminding yourself that we are family. I love you like my brother or sister. There is nothing that can divide us because whether we like it or not, we are connected.

You have heard the saying that blood is thicker than water, right? Do you know what that means? Friendships come and go, but family does not go anywhere. As a matter of fact, family comes over for Thanksgiving and they will stay a week longer than they are supposed to - because that is family. And guess what? You have to love them. You may not always like them, but you love them, right? And you are always sad to see them go, though you may rejoice as they pack their bags and exit the house. However, you still tell them, "Oh, we love you so much, hopefully, we'll see you again next year!"

You do know that the beauty of family is that sometimes your biological family is not the family that you would choose, right? Some of you have brothers and sisters, and you're thinking, "I wouldn't have chosen that one." But in your heart of hearts, you know that you wouldn't trade them for a million dollars. You wouldn't trade them at all. Do you know why? It is because of the fact that they are your family, and you are connected.

We all have family like that. They can call us up on the phone, any hour of the day or night. Whatever they need, we would do our absolute best to fulfill that need. We would pray for them, and we would be there. We would drive for considerable lengths of time, to hold their hands and make sure that whatever storm they had to go through, we would be there to walk with them.

We are family, and we are connected. Though we may not always agree on everything, we are family. That is what ultimately distinguishes us from strangers and friends. It is the family concept. As Spirit-filled believers, we are connected to the family of God.



Bobby Killmon

Theology

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I have contemplated this portion of Scripture over the years. What are your thoughts on it? The way it reads is pretty direct. It may seem a bit frightening for the sake of the backslider. Any insight would be deeply appreciated.

Hebrews 6:4-6, "For [it is] impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put [him] to an open shame."

I understand how respect for Scripture to be the very words of God should give serious pause for what this means about backsliding; that is God's point by inspiring this text to the Hebrews. That said, the context of the passage is critical to understanding the particular verses. This passage is written to the Hebrews, or Jewish converts, to Christianity. They were under increasing persecution because they were "kicked out" of worshipping at the Temple by the leaders of Judaism. When that occurred, the Roman government started persecuting Christianity because they respected things of antiquity but had no respect for "novelty" or new religions. Christianity had been protected up to that point by being seen as an outworking or branch of Judaism.

Under this intensifying persecution, all a Jewish Christian needed to do was return to Judaism for both them and their loved ones to be safe. However, if a Jewish Christian was saved and then chose to reject the Messiah for a return to Judaism, what they did is agree with those who crucified Jesus; thus they "crucify him afresh" (Heb. 6:6). To return to Judaism would essentially be to reject the Lord Jesus and thereby reject the only way to salvation (Jn. 14:6). From that place of rejection of Christ as the way, it is impossible to be saved in that place, because you rejected the only means of salvation; the only Door, the only Way, the only Sacrifice, the only Mediator.

This theme is shown in other passages such as the one regarding blasphemy of the Spirit (Mar. 3:29) or being turned over to reprobate minds (Rom. 1:28). In each case, the rejection of salvation by the individual in an ultimate sense is in view. God is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9); the reason people do so is because they reject Him and never turn again to salvation. When people start rejecting things like Jesus' name baptism, speaking in tongues as essential, a separated godly lifestyle of faith, or other clear apostolic truths, the admonition or warning of this passage would be needed. Why? So that through this necessary warning revealed in God's Word we might be able to also add, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." (Heb. 6:9)



T. W. Massengale

Church Growth

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A Contract with God

I am a firm believer in the importance of guest follow-up ministries. As I have oft said: 100% of your new converts come from

your guests. But since few receive the Holy Ghost the first time they come, we must get them to return. An effective guest follow-up ministry can double your repeat visits.

If a guest cared enough to get cleaned up, dressed up, and drive several miles to visit us, we should care enough to do the same. Every guest should receive a letter

from the pastor and a visit from a trained follow-up worker soon after coming.

Always take a nice gift, thank them for coming, and invite them back (a flyer for a special service works well here). If you feel prompted, ask them about a home Bible study ("Have you ever heard of our home Bible study ministry? No? Let me tell you about it!"). You can also ask if they have any prayer requests ("We have a great prayer ministry. Do you have any special needs you would like us to pray about?"). This unannounced visit should be short and casual. Most importantly, be kind, polite, and invite them back.

Your guests should be visited 3-4 times a year. Put at least three months between each visit, but the second and third visits are even more important than the first. You see, this is your contract with God.

You promise to knock on their door again and God promises to deal with their heart. Most people come to God in the midst of crisis. If God knows you are going to visit them again, He can easily arrange their life circumstances so they need His help. So, prayer for your past guests is a must. How do we pray? That God will draw them to an altar by whatever means, even via a life crisis if necessary.

Some feel that knocking on the doors of guests is too aggressive. Yet we have no problem knocking on the doors of strangers. May God give us a healthy dose of holy boldness and a willingness to obey the Lord's solemn command: "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." (Lk. 14:23)



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One World

One Mission

One Message

SCHEDULE

Wednesday

7:00 PM

Rev J.W. **Dillon**

Rev. Aaron **Bounds**

Thursday

9:30 AM

Rev. David **Shatwell**

Rev. Chester **Wright**

7:00 PM

Rev. Charles **Robinette**

Friday

9:30 AM

Rev. Chester **Wright**

Rev. David **Shatwell**

7:00 PM

Rev. Mark **Morgan**



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In June of 2015, the MA/RI District launched the 20/20/20 Vision Growth Initiative. The goal was to plant 20 new churches by the year 2020. With God's help, we have achieved that goal!

Now, the MA/RI District has launched a new growth initiative. Our vision is to double the number of churches and ministers in our district by the year 2030. We call it Decade to Double.

We are excited to announce a strategic partnership with the Louisiana District UPCI. We want to thank them for their pledge to send church planters and workers into the MA/RI District to help make this vision a reality.

CONTACT US TO BE A PART!

District Supt: Rev. Jay Stirnemann
Cell #: 401.374.0962
E-mail: jrs@christtempleonline.org

District NAM Director: Rev. Russell Farmer
Cell #: 401.481.5552
E-mail: onetrueth02@yahoo.com



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FOR FURTHER DETAILS



Carol Clemans

Spiritual Growth

carol@carolclemans.org

Will You Allow Your Selfishness to Destroy Your Salvation?

In my counseling nationwide, my heart breaks when an individual chooses a selfish desire to rule the heart instead of making the decision to totally surrender to God. The great commandment instructs us to love God with our whole (all) heart, soul, mind, and strength!

How do we do this? By passing every thought, feeling, and action through God first!

Heart, soul, mind is the inner "us" where we process our thoughts. When we take every thought to God first asking for His wisdom in our actions, we will be holy as He is holy! This means nailing our selfishness to the cross and surrendering our will to God's will. The result will be that we will become godly as a spouse, friend, child, pastor, employee, etc.

Our actions do impact those around us, either for godliness or selfishness. When a spouse continues to do something that they know in their heart is not pleasing to God and offends wife/husband, it is a sin. It can be relationally damaging to the heart of the marriage as a dagger to the physical heart. Why would we do anything that we would not do in the presence of God? God sees our heart! Nothing is hidden from Him!

When we keep God in the middle of the marriage, we will be God-conscious in matters that are offensive to our spouse. Using porn, alcohol, being abusively angry, selfishness, etc., are destructive devices to a marriage.

Each of us should be living our lives as Paul and be able to say, "Follow me as I follow Christ." When husbands are Christlike, wives will joyfully follow them as they follow Christ!

Order my handbook: "God's Design for Marriage" on my website: www.carolclemans.org or Kindle on amazon.com. It is packed full of God's Word. When we are Holy-Ghost-controlled, we will have love, joy, and peace in our marriages and all other relationships.

1 Cor. 6 – 18 – 20 teaches us to "glorify God in our body and our spirit which belongs to God!" Our every word and action must bring glory to God. God sees and knows every detail of our lives – nothing is hidden from Him! Be willing to surrender all to God!

www.carolclemans.org – nationwide counseling (636) 448-0121 – call and leave a message in confidentiality. Certified Pastoral Counselor/Certified Christian Life Coach/Bible teacher. Join www.patreon.com/carolclemans. Ref: Pastor Daniel Batchelor – Duplo, IL.



Vickie Hodges

Identity and Scripture

VickieHodgesSharingLife@gmail.com

LIFE-Living In Freedom EVERYDAY (Part 4)

We have finally reached the fourth phase/stage of our emotional healing journey. This stage has the most unique characteristics. It is a time of stillness and quietness before we experience living in our God-given purpose. This is the time when our battles are being won from within. The mind and the heart are now connected and they will travel the remainder of this healing journey together. They are no longer at war with one another. An amazing transformation is taking place.

As this transformation continues from within, it is mind-boggling to see our battles being won during this time of quietness and stillness. Whoever heard of battles being won in this manner? Our pride becomes totally humbled and the last stirrings of our ego become extinguished. If there are any remains of worldly ambition and carnality, they are totally obliterated. We have no other prayer than: "Lord, Thy will be done."

We are no longer held bound by the chains of guilt, shame, and worthlessness. There is no condemnation leading to victimization. The victim is now the victor. We are no longer fighting for our sanity. We have our Creator who is now fighting for us. No more hiding behind the masks that we thought were keeping us safe.

We are now living Romans 12:2 which reads, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God."

We never knew freedom could feel so good, and forgiveness taste so sweet! Continue on in this stage to allow your heart and mind to become saturated by the profound encounters of grace and the unexpected moments with mercy. These two components—mercy and grace—have been right beside us all along.

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

Needy People

People don't like being needy or being considered needy. Many shy away from those they think are needy. As we reflect on this idea of needy people, it is essential to determine who is needy. So, here are my thoughts on the matter.

I am needy! You are needy! All of humanity is needy! Every time you look in the mirror, you see a needy person. Ugh! Seriously? Absolutely. Let me explain.

God, in His omnipotence, created each of us and placed within each of us talents, capabilities, strengths, competencies, and skills. Then, to complete His 'very good' creation, He added a variety of needs.

Be thankful for the blessing of being needy. Without needs, we would become self-sufficient in our minds. Without needs, we would not need help from anybody, including God. At least, that would be the way we would operate. In reality, many behave that way today, and the result is disastrous.

God, in His omniscience, created us to be needy. He desires us to recognize the fact we have needs. Rather than hide them, ignore them, or try to meet them ourselves, He wants us to turn to Him to meet our needs.

God is a gentleman. He will not force us to allow Him to meet our needs. It is always a choice. Some of our needs may go unmet, or they may be met, but not in a pleasing way to God.

When it comes to meeting our needs, there are only two directions we can turn. We either turn to God, or we turn away from God. When we turn to God, there is a fear of losing control and being left alone.

God, in His omnipresence, promised He would never leave or forsake us. He will not abandon us. We can always trust Him. Memorize Proverbs 3:5-6. God is faithful. He shall supply all our needs according to His riches in glory (Philippians 4:19). My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth (Psalm 121:2).

To have me speak to your congregation in person or on zoom call 503-481-2934 (Pacific Time).

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

Do You Need to Amend Your 2020 Return?

Congress amended the tax code in March to exempt \$10,200 (\$20,400 for a couple) of unemployment from taxable income (only for those with adjusted gross income less than \$150,000 before the unemployment income). By the time the IRS implemented the change, which was retroactive for 2020, many had

already filed their tax return.

The IRS has since come out and said not to worry; they will review previously filed returns and issue refunds beginning in May if taxes were paid on unemployment benefits (up to the \$10,200/20,400 limits). However, it may still be beneficial to file an amended return.

While the IRS will refund federal taxes that were paid on the unemployment, it will not recalculate any changes for tax deductions or credits that you might now qualify for after your adjusted gross income is reduced. (It will recalculate credits if they

were on your original return, but if you didn't qualify on the original return, but now you do, you need to file an amended return.) The credits include the Earned Income Credit, college credits, etc.

You may also need to file an amended return to receive a refund from your state. You need to first check to see if your state is offering the same exemption (13 states have not done so).

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@dsacpains.com Website: www.dsacpains.com

THAT'S OUTRAGEOUS**Christian Politician Faces Six Years in Prison for Tweeting Bible Verses on Marriage, Sexuality**

A Christian member of the Finnish Parliament is facing six years imprisonment for allegedly committing three crimes, including "hate speech," for sharing her opinion on marriage and human sexuality on social media, on television and in a pamphlet.



The country's chief prosecutor has brought three criminal charges against Finnish Member of Parliament and former Minister of the Interior, Päivi Räsänen.

A Member of Parliament since 1995, Räsänen said she will "defend my right to confess my faith so that no one else would be deprived of their right to freedom of religion and speech."

One example charges her for citing Romans 24:27 along with a picture of the Bible passage.

Räsänen is no stranger to controversy as she has become known as a prominent Finnish defender of traditional Christian views on marriage, euthanasia and abortion. Her views are often criticized for being more conservative than those in the ECLF leadership.

Räsänen has said, "A conviction based on the Christian faith is more than a superficial opinion. The early Christians did not renounce their faith in lions' caves, why should I then renounce my faith in a court room?"

Church Forced to Cancel Event with Conservative Activist After Receiving Threats of Violence

Conservative activist Charlie Kirk was cancelled from appearing at a Washington church after the hosting church received threats.

According to The Washington Times, Roger Archer, senior pastor of Motion Church in Puyallup, Washington, said, "radical terrorist mobs" threatened the church with violence in response to Kirk's scheduled appearance.

"They sprung with threatening declarations," Archer said in a video response. "They vowed to not only burn our properties to the ground, but also brought threats of physical violence against our church leadership, our neighbors, their properties, and basically [vowed to] wreak havoc in our community..." Kirk is the founder and executive director of right-wing organization Turning Point USA.

**Supreme Court Vacates Ninth Circuit Ruling Against Church Suing California Over Worship Limits**

The U.S. Supreme Court has vacated an appellate court ruling against a Pentecostal church that was suing California over its worship restrictions aimed at curbing the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

In a recent order, the high court vacated a ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit that denied South Bay United Pentecostal Church injunctive relief from the pandemic restrictions on in-person worship instituted by Gov. Gavin Newsom, which have since been rescinded.

The order cited the Supreme Court case of *Tandon v. Newsom*, in which the justices issued a per curiam ruling in favor of multiple plaintiffs suing California over its ban on in-home worship attended by more than three households.

"Government regulations are not neutral and generally applicable, and therefore trigger strict scrutiny under the Free Exercise Clause, whenever they treat any comparable secular activity more favorably than religious exercise," the ruling stated.

"It is unsurprising that such litigants are entitled to relief. California's Blueprint System contains myriad exceptions and accommodations for comparable activities, thus requiring the application of strict scrutiny."

The Supreme Court remanded the case back to the Ninth Circuit "for further consideration in light of *Tandon v. Newsom*."

The Thomas More Society, which is helping to represent South Bay Pentecostal, emailed a statement Tuesday celebrating the Supreme Court order.

"The most recent April 26 ruling vacating the Ninth Circuit's prior judgment is another major victory for religious liberty," said Special Counsel Paul Jonna.

"And it sends yet another clear message to hostile lower courts: if you deprive citizens of constitutional rights, particularly the cherished right to the Free Exercise of Religion, the U.S. Supreme Court will intervene."

Last year, South Bay Pentecostal filed legal action against California over in-person worship restrictions, arguing that their religious services should be considered an essential activity.

The church experienced multiple legal defeats, with a district court judge ruling against the church last December and a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit ruling against it in January.

"Although South Bay has demonstrated irreparable harm, it has not demonstrated that the likelihood of success, the balance of equities or the public interest weigh in its favor," wrote U.S. Circuit Judge Kim McLane Wardlaw in the Ninth Circuit panel opinion.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ A federal judge has dismissed a high-profile lawsuit brought by four Connecticut high school female runners against the state's governing body, ruling that a legal dispute about transgender athletes cannot proceed because the two transgender athletes in question have graduated. The suit was filed by Alliance Defending Freedom on behalf of the four female athletes. Such "speculative contingencies" are

"insufficient to satisfy" the legal requirements, the judge wrote.

■ A CNN news story claiming "it's not possible" to know a person's gender or sex at birth was widely panned across social media this week, mainly because it was stated as a non-debatable fact. "If you act like a propaganda outlet, people are going to treat you like a propaganda outlet," one social media user tweeted.

SOCIAL TRENDS**Idaho Bans Critical Race Theory from Being Taught in Public Schools, Including Universities**

Idaho Governor Brad Little recently signed a nondiscrimination bill into law, preventing worldviews such as Critical Race Theory from being taught in public schools.

The bill, House Bill 377, forbids public schools and universities from teaching that "any sex, race, ethnicity, religion, color, or national origin is inherently superior or inferior." It also bars teaching that "individuals, by virtue of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, color, or national origin, are inherently responsible for actions committed in the past by other members of the same sex, race, ethnicity, religion, color, or national origin."



According to The Christian Post, Idaho lawmakers noted that these ideas are "often found in 'critical race theory,'" and they "exacerbate and inflame divisions on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity... or other criteria in ways contrary to the unity of the nation and the well-being of the state of Idaho and its citizens."

In the bill's transmittal letter sent to Republican House Speaker Scott Bedke, Gov. Little contended that "the claim that there is widespread, systemic indoctrination occurring in Idaho classrooms is a serious allegation."

Christopher F. Rufo, a director at the Discovery Institute, praised the bill's signing, calling it a "historic win."

LEGAL TRENDS**Christian College Sues Biden Admin. over Transgender Policy Requiring Mixed Showers & Dorms**

College of the Ozarks, a Christian school located in Springfield, Missouri, filed a federal lawsuit against the Biden administration, alleging that a new federal policy violates the U.S. Constitution by forcing the school to open their dorms and shared shower spaces to students who identify as the opposite sex.

At issue is a directive by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The directive was issued in accordance with an LGBT-themed executive order by President Biden.

The directive, the suit says, has an "adverse effect" on the rights of the college's students and employees, including "their privacy, religious, liberty, [and] educational... interests."



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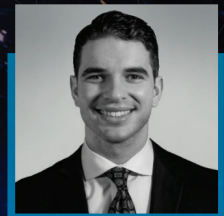
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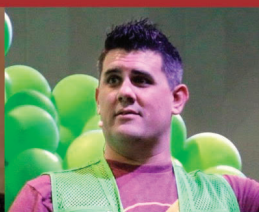
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FORWARD

Rev. Cortt Chavis | Loganville, GA

Transcribed by Angela Repetto

Exodus 14:10-15 "And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."

The Enemy

Sometimes, we talk about fear like it is insignificant. We downgrade it to some cool saying like, "Fear not," or "Faith over fear." This is all good, necessary, and true, but not easily lived out. In 2021 we are moving forward, but we need to first address the fear. Fear is real. The Bible says that when the children of Israel lifted up their eyes and saw the enemy coming for them, fear gripped them. There is nothing worth having that the enemy will not try to keep you from getting. He is always pursuing with no holidays or days off. If you thought the enemy would just let the church walk into this new year and not try to stop us, you are wrong. The enemy is real. He does not want us to achieve what God has set for us to achieve. He wants us to fail and to fear. Every one of us knows that if you try to get away from the enemy, he will not easily let you go. Living for God is not all "unicorns and rainbows." But here is what you need to know: the Lord is on your side.

The Effects of Fear

Fear has a way of taking over you and making you do things that you would not normally do. Fear made the children of Israel forget how bad it was in Egypt. Imagine the euphoric moment of them escaping Egypt, where they had been enslaved. For 450 years, they worked under the whip of the taskmaster. God had now set them free and promised them a land flowing with milk and honey.

But at the first moment of fear, they forgot it all. Fear caused them to say things that they really did not mean. They said, "Moses, what are you doing? We told you to leave us in Egypt. It would have been better for us to stay in that mess." None of this was true. We know the Israelites did not mean it. It was just their fear. Fear causes you to think crazy thoughts. It causes you to look back and say, "It was simpler back then." If you are walking with God, it is going to be a journey and a

fight. Scripture says, "I press toward the mark of the high calling..." (Phil. 3:14) It is not simple or easy, but it is what God has called us to do.

The Address of Fear

Moses said, "Fear not." The first thing we need to address is fear. We need to stop being afraid. Fear is real, absolutely. It is uncertain, absolutely. But we have to look at it and acknowledge that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power and of a sound mind. If you are in fear, know that it did not come from God. The second thing Moses said was, "Stand still." When we are afraid and do not know what will happen tomorrow, what we need to do is to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." We need to stop looking back, take a deep breath, and calm down. God is in control. He has not changed. He has not left on vacation, and He never sleeps or loses a battle. He has not failed me, and He will not fail you. Stand still. The Lord is about to fight for you, and you will hold your peace. God is going to fight, and you are going to be quiet.

Going Back

A lot of people gave up in 2020. They gave up on ministries and callings. But let me tell you about the people who stayed "in the house." They lost family members and became sick, but they stayed. God is doing something with those that remain. Do not go back to Egypt now, even if there seems to be no way forward. We know what is going to happen to the Israelites, but this is because we have hindsight. Moses did not know. The Red Sea is not a creek. You cannot see one side of the Red Sea from the other. It is vast. The Lord said, "But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea..." (Ex. 14:16) The rod represents God's supernatural power. It was the rod that became a snake, and struck the dirt to make lice. He also told Moses to stretch out his hand. This is because God's power requires our participation. While you are calling on Him to do a great work, do not forget that you have to put in the work, too. We cannot "sit back" and hope that God will do something that we will not participate in ourselves.

Moving Forward

There is no room for spectators in 2021. God has a way, and the way is forward. This church is moving forward, right through the craziness of this world. Just move forward in the things that He has already told you. Do not forget in the darkness, what God spoke to you in the light.

I, too, have questioned the voice of

God. I, too, was fearful. But the Lord said, "Do not forget the vision that I told you." If we would just continue to go forward in what He has already told us, He will part the waters. All the craziness of this world will be a wall beside us, but we will go through on dry land. God is about to do something in this season that will blow people's minds. It does not take much, and it will not necessarily be fancy. We are simply walking forward into what God has already given us.

Obeying His Voice

Jeremiah 7:23-24 "But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward."

In the years to come, the Israelites walked in the counsel and imagination of their evil hearts and went backward, not forward. Shut off every negative voice in your life, so that you can hear God.

The worst person you can talk to is yourself. Stop talking to yourself.

Stop believing everything you say.

Get out of your head. Your heart

and imagination are evil. If you listen to

them, you will go down the wrong path. Anytime I go backward, it is because I am listening to myself. I believed something that I made up. The only way to go forward is to obey His voice. I have to get in the Word of God. David said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Ps. 119:11) If I put His Word in my heart, when I talk to my heart, my heart will speak back the Word.

Occupying the Space

Joshua 1:1-5 "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

God made Moses a promise: Everywhere you put your feet, I have given it to you. It is already yours. All you have to do is occupy the space. There are some dark places in our cities. If we will just occupy the space, He has already given it to us. All it takes now is moving forward into the thing that is already ours. We do not have to fight. He will go before us and fight for us. By the time we get there, they will be so scared because they already know that we are God's people. We are moving forward. It is a tumultuous sea in front of us, but God will clear a path.

If I told you there was no fear involved in this, I would be lying. There is fear. But we can be afraid and move forward at the same time. Bravery and courage have never been the absence of fear, but rather, action in the presence of fear. What God spoke to our fathers, He is speaking to us today. God has not left us. He has not forgotten our callings, or the burdens He has upon our hearts. He has not given up. All He is looking for is a people to move forward. I do not know what is in front of us. But I know the God who has given it to us, so we will walk forward into it.

Rev. Cortt Chavis and his wife, Amanda, currently pastor Truth Chapel in Loganville, GA. They have three children: Cortney, Sydney, and Isaac.



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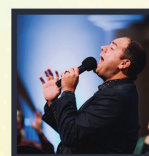
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Word To The Wise:

"Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence." - Helen Keller

A young boy went to church for the first time. His grandpa asked how he liked it.

The youngster's review: "The music was nice, but the commercial was too long."

* * * * *

Two years after my heart attack, I was teaching my college course when I felt discomfort in my chest. I paused the class to pop my medication and felt better quickly.

"Now, if I ever do have a heart attack," I told my students, "I will give extra credit to whoever gives me CPR."

One of them shouted out, "How much?"

* * * * *

Remember: Those who told us we don't need guns or walls have surrounded themselves with guns and walls.



* * * * *

Negotiations between union members and their employer were at an impasse. The union denied that their workers were flagrantly abusing their contract's sick-leave provisions.

One morning at the bargaining table, the company's chief negotiator held aloft the morning edition of the newspaper.

"This man," he announced, "Called in sick yesterday!"

There on the sports page, was a photo of the supposedly ill employee, who had just won a local golf tournament with an excellent score.

The silence in the room was broken by a union negotiator. "Wow," he said. "Think of what kind of score he could have had if he hadn't been sick!"

* * * * *

I asked my daughter to kindly give me the phone book.

"The phone book?!" she laughed at me, "I can't remember the last time I had someone ask me for one of those old things."

She reached into her purse. "Here, take my brand-new iPhone and use that instead."

So the spider is dead, the iPhone is broken, and my daughter is furious.



"It's fruit-of-the-Spirit cake. Eating it will test your patience."

* * * * *

A man called his neighbor to help move a couch that was stuck in the doorway. They got on either end of the couch and struggled until they were exhausted, but the couch wouldn't budge.

"Forget it," the man finally gasped. "We'll never get this inside the house."

A frustrated voice came from the other end of the couch: "get the couch INSIDE the house?!"

* * * * *

The father asked his young son for an update on a situation that involved him being picked on at school.

The son replied, "This 'killing them with kindness' is taking longer than I thought it would."



"Hey honey, the letter's about working in the church nursery. We've been called up for active duty."



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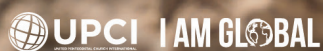
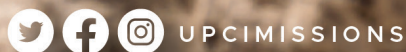
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