

# America's Moral Collapse Demands 'Radical Action'

*Calling the power of Christianity pervasively "ineffective" in America, a prominent Pentecostal leader is asking Christians to fast, pray and repent for 21 days in the dawn of the New Year.*



[ ] Billy Wilson, executive director of the International Center for Spiritual Renewal and a leader at the Awakening America Alliance, says Christians in America must recognize the moral depravity of the times, humbly repent for the spiritual passivity of the church, and fast and pray for a Third Great Awakening.

"We are very convinced that our present spiritual state in the church demands radical action," Wilson told *Charisma*. "One of the radical actions that scripture gives us, which God ordains, is the act of fasting. One of the things we're fasting for and repenting of is our lack of effectiveness in changing our culture for Christ, and also for [failing] to bring a new generation to Christ."

Between Jan. 1 and Jan. 21, Awakening America's "21 Days of Awakening" is calling on Christians across America to "dedicate 2009 to the Lord." "It's a fast of contrition and repentance and humility," said Wilson, noting thousands have already committed to joining him. "To seek God together, across the body of Christ, for a new spiritual awakening in the American church and across the U.S."

Wilson said more than 300 parachurch ministries are affiliated with the Awakening America Alliance—a three- to five-year initiative that launched in early 2008 aimed at ushering a Third Great Awakening into America. Alliance participants include Assemblies of God General Superintendent George O.

Wood, AGLow International President Jane Hansen, TheCall Founder Lou Engle, Foursquare Church President Jack Hayford and Church of God in Christ pastor George McKinney.

Since Wilson announced the 21-day fast many denominational leaders have called on their entire constituencies to fast. "We feel it's like a 'first fruits' principle, as with giving and tithing, we're dedicating this new year to the Lord," he said. "We wanted to push our plates back. It's sacrificial. [We're] saying to heaven: 'We want this year to be different in America.'"

Wilson said, generally speaking, Christian effectiveness in evangelism in America and Christians' overall effect on culture "has been in a slow, two- to three-decade decline."

"We believe that that ineffectiveness signals to us that our fruitfulness needs to increase, which means our relationship with Jesus needs to deepen, and out of increased intimacy comes increased fruitfulness," he said. "One of the ways toward increased intimacy is through the discipline of fasting."

Jentezen Franklin, senior pastor of Free Chapel Worship Center in Gainesville, Ga., and author of the *New York Times* best-seller *Fasting*, told *Charisma* that beginning the new year with fasting adds a supernatural element to a believer's life. "For me, fasting has become the secret to obtaining open doors, miraculous provision, favor and the tender touch of God upon my life."

Through a Christian's commitment to give his or her heart to God in fasting, "the focus after the holidays will turn quickly back to knowing God intimately," Franklin said.

"Just as you set the course of each day by beginning with morning prayer, and just as you set the course of each week by beginning that week in church on Sundays, when you give God the first part of the year in fasting and prayer you set the

course for the rest of the year.”

Franklin added that the corporate unity and blessings that come as churches or groups fast together are significant and supernatural. “When you enter into a fast at the beginning of the year with the body of Christ you link up with thousands of people all over the world, who also begin the New Year with a fast. When a group of people [fast together], it is multiplied strength [and] multiplied power.”

Wilson, who helped organize a celebration marking the Azusa Street Revival centennial in April 2006, strongly agreed. “When we fast in a corporate way and in a called way, it adds a public nature to fasting that is a bit different. It also adds a multiplied effect to fasting that we believe positions us for God's blessing,” he said. “Ultimately, to change the world we must have something and be something different than the world in which we live.

“Sometimes we get hung up on certain [issues] and we forget that the real base root of this is that the church is to be intimate with her bridegroom, who is Jesus Christ, and that out of that will come the change we need in our society and in our culture,” Wilson said. “It seems that in each movement there's a hungry remnant that realizes America is in desperate need of a deep transformational revival. It is [among] that remnant that we're finding unity and resonance.”

Rick Joyner, founder of MorningStar Ministries, said he's excited to hear that Wilson is intent on motivating the American church to fast at the New Year. “I think the next few years will be some of the most intense, but potentially fruitful the church in America has had in a very long time,” Joyner told *Charisma*. “But we must come to a much higher level of unity to make it.”

Added Franklin: “For several years now the Spirit has been calling the church to a new level of fasting. If you want to

know God and experience the presence of God ... [if] you want to go into the throne room and see your Father's face, join the fasting movement.” **-Paul Steven Ghiringhelli**

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## **Pro-Israel Groups Say Self-Defense Motivated Gaza Offensive**

*Israel was forced into launching airstrikes in Gaza last Saturday to defend against Hamas rocket attacks in southern Israel, leaders say.*



[ ] Christian and Jewish observers say Israel was forced into launching airstrikes last Saturday to defend against Hamas rocket attacks.

Christian political analyst and commentator Mike Evans said on Monday that the mainstream media has ignored Israel's main rationale for airstrikes in Gaza. “The answer is quite simply one that most do not want to hear,” Evans said. “Self-defense.”

He said it isn't right for media outlets to give suspicious treatment of the actions taken by Israel, now in its fourth day of air raids on Hamas command centers, training camps, and rocket manufacturing and storage facilities.

“We must ask ourselves if we would allow al-Qaeda to take up residence in Brooklyn and randomly fire rockets into New York City,” Evans said, seeking to compare a hypothetical case of domestic terror with the situation in Israel. “Israel cannot

be expected to react any differently than would the government of the United States under identical circumstances.”

Evans pointed out that Hamas—a recognized terrorist group that Palestinians, in free and internationally monitored elections, voted into power in 2006—violently seized control of Gaza in 2007 and since January 2008 has launched more than 2,500 cross-border rockets and mortar bombs into Israel. “It is vital that the international community and the Arab world turn its attention to Hamas as the perpetrator and put pressure on it to halt attacks on the civilian population of Israel.”

On Tuesday, the Jewish leader of an influential pro-Israel Christian lobby told Charisma his group is pleased with America's reaction to Israel's offensive in Gaza. “The Bush administration has so far stood with Israel,” said David Brog, executive director of Christians United for Israel. “They have publicly recognized that it was Hamas which violated the ceasefire and that Hamas is responsible for the renewal of violence.”

Brog said he encourages Christians to contact the White House and thank President Bush for standing with Israel. “Our basic point is that every sovereign nation has a fundamental right to try to stop missiles from being fired into its territory,” he said. “If you support Israel's right to self-defense, you need to speak up, because Israel's critics are most certainly speaking up.”

In a YouTube video launched on Tuesday, Earl Cox, founder and co-host of Frontline Jerusalem, issued an urgent global plea asking Christians from all time zones and nations to wholeheartedly pray for Israel. He urged believers to intercede for three hours on New Year's Day, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., for God to protect “His land and His people.”

“We feel that prayer is probably the most important thing that anybody can do right now,” Cox said. “The No. 1 prayer is for

God to lay His hand of blessing on Israel and for protection of those [Israeli] soldiers.”

Tzipi Livni, minister of foreign affairs for Israel, told parliament on Monday that Israel has been under attack from Gaza for nearly a decade. “We did everything we could to prevent a deterioration of the situation,” she said. “We have conducted ourselves with unsurpassed restraint. We grinded our teeth, bit our lips, unturned every stone, to prevent the need for widespread action.

“However,” she said, “our responsibility is to the safety of our children, their right to walk to school and kindergarten. Israel is making it plain yet again today that its desire for peace is not a sign of weakness.”

Livni said the global community is in a situation right now that splits leadership between moderates and extremists and everyone is being forced to choose a side.

“The world is divided, between those who believe in live-and-let-live and those who try to impose their beliefs upon others,” she said. “Between people who wish to live in peace and people for whom hate, incitement, terror and violence are their daily routine, the basis for educating their children, and the voices emanating from some of their mosques.”

Evans, best-selling author of books dealing with Middle East conflict, including *The Final Move Beyond Iraq*, said Israel's military has demonstrated great restraint over the years on its southern border with Gaza, while civilians have grown accustomed to the wailing of warning sirens, alerting them to run for shelter every time rockets are launched from Gaza toward Israeli schools, shopping malls and homes.

“Children in the area grow up with the fear that they could be the next target,” he said.

Evans said Hamas is known for practically inviting civilian

casualties by launching rockets from residential areas. Even though Israeli forces target only Hamas militants and warfare—and casualties in Gaza are largely terrorist-related—he said Hamas tactics put civilians in the line of fire, which is why Israel is currently sending humanitarian aid such as food, medications and electricity to innocent bystanders in Gaza.

“Hamas is not above using innocent Palestinian [blood] to achieve its radical agenda,” he said. “It is obvious these leaders have no regard for the sanctity of life and will go to any lengths to achieve their fundamentalist aims. This heinous conduct exposes women and children ... and places the onus for any deaths directly on Hamas.”

Livni also drew a distinction between the terrorists in charge in Gaza and the people under their rule. “Israel is acting against Hamas and not against the Palestinian population,” she said. “Israel would like to reiterate to anyone with complaints about the [safety of the] population, to redirect them to the party directly responsible for the population's situation—Hamas, which is holding the population hostage.”

Livni said Israel's current struggle is not an isolated one and called on the West to show solidarity with the forces of freedom. “Israel is standing on the frontlines of the Western world's war against terror, and we expect support for doing the right thing and fighting the war of the entire free world.”

David Rubin, founder of Shiloh Israel Children's Fund, a nonprofit group based in Israel that supports victims of terrorism, echoed Livni's sentiments. “Israel is once again at war against a terror organization,” he said. “Please remember that the Islamic terror groups are targeting the world. We just happen to be on the front lines.” —Paul Steven Ghiringhelli

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# **Eight People I Admired Most in 2008**

As we end this year I want to reflect on eight individuals—seven of whom I know personally—whom I greatly admire. These are the people who inspired me most in 2008:

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# **A Word of Encouragement: Cross Your Jordan in 2009**

*Don't keep wandering in yesterday's wilderness as this new year begins. It's time to challenge your giants and claim new territory.*

I spent the last couple of months of 2008 buried in the book of Joshua. Casual readers might dismiss the narrative as nothing more than a description of military conquests, but when I delve into its pages I discover the revelation of Jesus Christ—our “Joshua”—who invites us to engage in a spiritual adventure beyond our wildest dreams.

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# Become a Reformer

**Editor's Note:** *As the new year approaches, numerous ministry leaders are seeking God to hear what He is saying to His people. This week and through the month of January we will bring you some of the words they are receiving. Today's Prophetic Insight is from Barbara Wentroble, founder of International Breakthrough Ministries and Breakthrough Business Network ([internationalbreakthroughministries.org](http://internationalbreakthroughministries.org)), who is a gifted apostolic and prophetic minister. She believes God is calling us to take on the anointing of a reformer for 2009.*

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## Leading Charismatic Theologian's Library for Sale

*The collection of the late J. Rodman Williams, best known for his seminal work *Renewal Theology*, will be auctioned online, with a starting bid of \$950,000.*



[ ] The personal library of late charismatic theologian J. Rodman Williams is to be auctioned online, with an opening bid of \$950,000.

The collection of 2,976 books includes Bible commentaries and classic works by writers such as Thomas á Kempis, Frank Bartleman and Martyn Lloyd-Jones. The volumes date back to Williams' college days, and were accumulated over his 42 years as a theology professor, most recently at Regent University School of Divinity.

An announcement on [Williams' Web site](#) said many of the books

in the library are rare or out-of-print.

“It is not that he agreed with each of the authors, but that he wanted to know and understand other viewpoints,” the announcement said. “The Bible and much prayer, plus his books and long hours of study, were basic to his life-long search to know the pure truths of God.”

None of the books will be sold separately.

Williams, who died in October at age 90, is the author of *Renewal Theology*, which was the first exhaustive examination of systematic theology from a charismatic-Pentecostal perspective. He is also the author of at least 10 other works and numerous articles, many of which relate to Pentecostal-charismatic renewal.

Educated at Davidson College, Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, Williams was an ordained Presbyterian minister before he entered academia. After being filled with the baptism of the Holy Spirit in 1965, he became president of the International Presbyterian Charismatic Communion, participated in Vatican-Pentecostal dialogue, and was a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, according to Regent.

He also was a founding president of the Melodyland School of Theology in California before joining the faculty of Regent in 1982. He became a professor emeritus in Regent's Divinity School in 2001.

Williams said on his Web site that *Renewal Theology* was an effort to “reclaim” neglected biblical truths. “Since it is my conviction that church tradition and theology have generally failed to treat adequately the aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit that may be called ‘pentecostal’ and ‘charismatic,’ *Renewal Theology* is an earnest attempt to bring these matters to light,” he wrote.

Regent founder Pat Robertson calls *Renewal Theology* “a milestone in biblical scholarship” and Jack Hayford, president of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, said Williams’ “work and workmanship are helping secure the moorings of solid theology, bringing doctrinal perspective to and fresh biblical accountability upon the charismatic movement.”

The profit from the library sale will be used to translate the three volumes of *Renewal Theology* into other languages. The book is currently available in Korean and German, and has been partially translated into Italian.

A complete list of the books in the library can be found [here](#).

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## Ted Haggard Says He’s ‘Miserable’ in New Film

*An HBO documentary that airs next month follows the disgraced evangelical pastor to Arizona, after he was dismissed from his former church in Colorado amid a drug and sex scandal.*

**Dec. 26, 2008** – Former pastor Ted Haggard admits in a new HBO documentary titled *The Trials of Ted Haggard* that he was guilty of sexual immorality in the past, but that he’s unhappy with some of the consequences he, his wife, Gayle, and his five children have had to face since he was caught in the scandal two years ago.

“We’ve been exiled permanently from the state of Colorado,” he told filmmaker Alexandra Pelosi in 2007. “We’re miserable.”

Haggard, who was accused of soliciting a male prostitute and

purchasing methamphetamines in November 2006, moved his family back to Colorado Springs earlier this year and is selling life insurance to make a living.

Next month, he will help promote the new HBO documentary.

Before *The Trials of Ted Haggard* began making publicity, Haggard remained mostly out of the public eye since being dismissed from his former church in 2006.

One notable exception was when he spoke last month in the pulpit of a longtime friend—the pastor of Open Bible Fellowship in Morrison, Ill. After that appearance leaders involved in Haggard's original restoration process quickly told *Charisma* that they strongly **disagreed with his decision to speak at the church.**

In addition, Haggard's spiritual restoration was deemed "incomplete" earlier this year by leaders from New Life Church, which Haggard founded in Colorado Springs, Colo., in 1984.

Brady Boyd, senior pastor of New Life Church, told *Charisma* the church has freed its former pastor from any further obligation. "We have released Ted and Gayle from their separation agreement with New Life Church," he said. "They are free to move forward with their lives in any way they choose without any legal constraint from the church. We wish Ted, Gayle and their family only the best in the future."

In the film, Haggard acknowledges that he violated church rules and "shouldn't have done that," but questions the wisdom of the church leaders who banished him for being, as Pelosi suggests, "bad for business."

"I think if they would've been chess players instead of checker players they would've realized that I am their business—somebody struggling with sin," Haggard says in the 42-minute documentary, which airs Jan. 29.

Pelosi, daughter of U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, befriended Haggard in 2005 when he was still New Life's pastor and head of the 30 million-member National Association of Evangelicals. She gathered footage for a documentary called *Friends of God*, which focused on evangelicalism's power in Washington politics.

For her latest project, Pelosi interviewed Haggard during the year and a half after the 2006 scandal, filming him selling insurance door-to-door and following him on his first-ever secular job interview—a counseling position at the University of Phoenix. “If they don't google me, I'll get the job,” he tells her.

Haggard appears in the documentary at times contrite, at other times as if victimized by the church establishment. He explains to Pelosi that homosexuality is seen as worse than murder in some Christian circles. “If you google me you'd think I'm Adolf Hitler,” he says.

He says his homosexual urges stemmed from same-sex sex play in the seventh grade and that “it all blew up” when he turned 50.

More recently, at Open Bible Fellowship last month Haggard said his same-sex temptation might have resulted from a sexual experience he had as a 7-year-old with a male worker employed by his father.

Haggard's wife, Gayle, tells Pelosi that before the scandal broke she considered herself a happy woman, completely unaware of the depth of her husband's internal struggle.

She says she stayed with her husband after the scandal because she loved him and believed their marriage was worth fighting for. “I knew that to restore honor to our children, the best thing I could do was restore honor to him,” she says.

In the film, Haggard identifies himself as an evangelical Christian, who “from time to time struggles with same-sex

attraction.” He denies a comment, widely circulated in the media after the scandal, that he claimed to be “completely heterosexual.”

Haggard says that just because he still struggles with same-sex attraction doesn't mean he's abandoned his traditional views on marriage and family. “I still believe this,” Haggard says, “even though I'm a sinner and even though I'm weak, that God's best plan for human beings is for man and woman to unite together.” **—Paul Steven Ghiringhelli**

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# Don't Be Afraid To Fail

*by John Stanko*

At a Glance

- **Question:** Is failure a learning experience?
- **Question:** Can we often learn more from failure than from success?
- **Question:** Are we always to be learning and growing?

Have you ever failed at anything in your life? Do you know anyone who has?

If you've been around long enough, the answer to both questions is a

resounding "yes!" That means you know how difficult it can be to bounce back

from a failure, especially if you are a Christian. Believers seem to think that

spiritual people will always do the right thing, and that a misstep or failure

is a sign that our spirituality is deficient.

Yet with faith, it is possible to be even stronger after a failure. Numerous

biblical figures, including Peter, Moses, David and Abraham demonstrated this

truth.

When I conduct seminars on this topic, I lead people through the following logic:

**Question:** Is failure a learning experience? **Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Can we often learn more from failure than from success?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Are we always to be learning and growing? **Answer:** Yes.

I consider the most significant redemptive failure in the Bible to be Samson.

Samson is mentioned as a hero of the faith in Hebrews 11, right along with Moses and Abraham. "And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson," the writer of Hebrews tells us (v. 32, NKJV).

When Samson's name is mentioned, there is no asterisk or footnote pointing out what a colossal failure he was. In fact, it was his faith during a time of failure that earned him this honorable mention.

Let's look at three lessons we can learn from Samson's life. If you don't know his story, take time now to read about him in Judges 13:1-16:31.

**1. God is often leading you, even though you may not know it.**

The Bible tells us regarding Samson: "Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. So he

went up and told  
his father and mother, saying, 'I have seen a woman in Timnah  
of the daughters  
of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife.'  
Then his father  
and mother said to him, 'Is there no woman among the daughters  
of your brethren,  
or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from  
the uncircumcised  
Philistines?'

"And Samson said to his father, 'Get her for me, for she  
pleases me well.'  
But his father and mother did not know that it was of the  
Lord—that He was  
seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at  
that time the  
Philistines had dominion over Israel" (Judg. 14:1-4).

Notice that Samson's parents did not realize his request for a  
wife from  
among the Philistines was prompted by God. In a similar way,  
God is working in  
your life to fulfill your purpose whether you realize it or  
not. It doesn't  
matter what you can see or understand. Faith requires that you  
believe God is at  
work in your life, even in the failures and hardship.

Once I was driving someplace and got lost. The delay made me  
late for an  
important meeting. I was so distressed that I was not on  
time—punctuality is  
one of my highest values. Yet several years later I  
encountered a situation in  
which I was able to use the same roads I was on when I was  
lost to get to  
another place I needed to go. God was using my failure to

prepare me for future  
success.

I know this example doesn't seem significant in view of the much bigger issues we face in life, but doesn't the end result hold true for more crucial failures, such as relational breakdowns or business losses, as well? God uses our failures, which can be monumental at the time, to prepare us for some future success.

In Samson's case, his family didn't understand what was going on, and neither did Samson. God was leading him, however—positioning him right where God wanted him to be so he could do what the Lord wanted him to do.

It may not seem as if God is leading you, but He is. When you feel as if He isn't there, trust Him more, not less. Put your hope in the God of your purpose and move on. Have faith in God, even in the midst of a seeming failure.

## **2. Don't ignore or run from your past; face it.**

Samson's story continues: "So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah. Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had

done.

“Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass

of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the carcass of the

lion. He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating.

When he came to

his father and mother, he gave some to them, and they also ate. But he did not

tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion” (Judg.

14:5-9).

I would argue that your most significant and life-giving testimonies are not

the great successes you’ve had but your greatest failures and the way in which

God helped you recover from them. Like Samson, you may have wrestled some lions

such as loneliness, bankruptcy, broken relationships and unemployment. Even if

you are young, you undoubtedly have testimonies of defeating, through the power

of God, lions that came to destroy you.

When Samson returned to the lion he had torn apart with his bare hands, it

brought forth something sweet that fed both him and his parents, even though it

was dead. What is in your past that you thought was dead? Is it a failure, or

something you enjoyed doing but no longer do? Or is it a significant victory

that you don’t talk about anymore?

Perhaps it's time to revisit that and see if there is something sweet in it.

In faith, go back over the lessons you learned during a time of failure and see

if they can help you or someone else today. Use those lessons to write a book or

screenplay, counsel others or simply encourage yourself as you face today's

trials. When you faithfully recount your victories in the midst of failures, God

will help you bring forth something sweet.

### **3. When you fail, run to God—not from Him.**

If you are familiar with Samson's story, you will recall that after falling

in love with the Philistine woman, Samson unwittingly gave her the secret to his

strength—his uncut hair. The Philistines used this knowledge to take his

strength away, and he ended up shaved, blind and in prison.

But while he was

incarcerated, God prepared him for his ultimate victory, described in the

passage below.

“So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, ‘Call for

Samson, that he may perform for us.’ So they called for Samson from the prison,

and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars. Then

Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, ‘Let me feel the pillars which

support the temple, so that I can lean on them.’

“Now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines

were there—about three thousand men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed. Then Samson called to the Lord, saying, ‘O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!’

“And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left.

Then Samson said, ‘Let me die with the Philistines!’ And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So

the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life”

(Judg. 16:25-30).

Earlier in this chapter we find a significant verse: “However, the hair of

his head began to grow again after it had been shaven” (Judg. 16:22). Even

though Samson failed, the source of his strength (his hair) began to return when

he focused again on fulfilling God’s purpose for his life.

At this point in the story, however, Samson was a miserable failure, or so it

seemed. He was defeated, blinded and forced to entertain his enemies. Yet Samson

prayed and God heard him, and he literally brought the house down at his last

performance.

You have to admire Samson’s faith. If failure disqualifies someone, then why

was he praying? What right did he have to ask God for another chance? And why did God hear his prayer? God didn't seem to mind that Samson was a faithful failure.

We too must overcome our tendency to run from God when we fail. We inherited that trait from Adam and Eve, who hid from God in the garden after they disobeyed Him (see Gen. 3:8). In faith, we must overcome the tendency of running from God and substitute it with a habit of running to God. The Scriptures assure us that we can approach God boldly, just as Samson did, even when we fail.

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:15-16).

What lessons can you learn from Samson's failures? How can you apply them to your current situation? Is it time to trust God even though it seems as if nothing is happening in your life? Is it time to re-evaluate your past through the eyes of faith and see if there is a failure-turned-victory that can yield something useful for Him and others?

Take time to write out your answers on a piece of paper or in your journal.

Put down your thoughts as you study Samson's life. Then look

at the lessons from other faithful failures such as Moses, David and Peter. Use their profiles to map out a faith path to recovery, turning your failures into wonderful learning lessons for you and others.

If Samson made it, so can you, but only if you don't allow your failures to derail you. Having faith in God will keep you on the right path and will help make you into a "faith-full" failure, as Samson was.

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**ONLINE EXCLUSIVE:** For tips on how to live confidently in spite of failure, go to .

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## Christmas Canceled in India

*This year, due to the extreme persecution of Christians in Orissa, India, many are fearful of celebrating Christmas.*



[] The intense persecution of Christians in Orissa, India has

forced the country's minority group to fear celebration of the upcoming Christmas holiday.

In recent months, Christians have been the victims of relentless violence carried out by Hindu extremists in retaliation for the August 2008 murder of a renowned Hindu leader.

Although a radical Maoist group claimed responsibility for the leader's assassination, Christian homes and communities continue to be viciously attacked by Hindus.

It is a crisis that has forced tens of thousands of Christians to flee for their lives into the jungles or refugee camps, and has provoked one of the worst humanitarian crises the region has seen in recent years.

Hindu extremists initially called for a "bandh" on December 25, a forced shutdown of the entire society that would serve as a pretext for attacks on anyone who publicly tried to celebrate Christmas.

However, the state government recently called off the bandh in the face of nationwide criticism from other church leaders.

But Christmas celebrations may still be difficult to carry out or even enjoy in Orissa this year, particularly with the recent destruction of hundreds of local churches.

And as attacks from Hindu extremists remain a constant reality in the Christian community, many believers still fear the repercussions of any sort of Christmas worship service.

**-Christian Freedom International**