

# Bishop TD Jakes: The Gospel Is Needed More Than Ever Before

Recovery from the pandemic has been a slow process for churches and individuals alike. Author and pastor of The Potter's House in Dallas, Texas, Bishop T.D. Jakes says the church must rise to the challenge of fostering both physical and spiritual healing.

"The church is needed more than ever before. The gospel is needed more than ever before," Jakes says in a recent panel on churches and COVID-19. He believes it's vital to find "ways that we can minister to the souls of men, the emotions, the mind, memories in a holistic way."

"If you're not sleeping right, if you're not eating right, if you're having digestive issues," he continues, "it may be coming from suppressed trauma that may not be showing outwardly but may be eating you up inwardly."

In this, he says, "ministry is very helpful."

Quoting Bishop Vashti McKenzie of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Jakes observes, "trouble doesn't last always, but trauma lasts for a while." Just because the trouble dissipates, "does not mean that the trauma is gone," Jakes says, and this is exactly where the church needs to step in.

Jakes points out that the residue of trauma is prevalent by the increase in gun violence, the "escalation" of murders, divorce and spousal abuse, at especially high numbers during the pandemic. These things need to be a top priority for the church to address, Jakes says.

He then correlates Psalm 142:4 when “David said, ‘No man cared for my soul,’” with the responsibility of the church to care for the whole human being, not just the encouragement of physical health.

He says, “The doctors can care for your body, but the church cares for your soul. So whether it takes therapy, counseling, but most of all ministry, to get you to well, that’s what we want to see happen.” {eoa}

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## **Much of the ‘Prophetic’ Has Become Pathetic**

This past week I was watching and listening carefully to judge a supposed “heavy” prophetic word a friend sent to gain my perspective. More on that later. I normally don’t have the time, patience or even interest to listen to the 999 supposed “prophetic” words that are out there on internet la-la land, with most not worth a nickel to me, but because I have high regard for my friend I made time to watch and listen to the prophecy.

We have so much of the so-called prophetic in America, and this is one of the reasons for the rampant deception that presently exists in many churches and Christians. Frankly, I’m weary of the excesses, extremes and abuses of the gift. Most Christians are not familiar with the real prophetic, so they are swallowed up by the false. People aren’t grounded in the full counsel of the Word or how to follow Jesus and be led by the Holy Spirit. Instead, they follow their favorite elevated

preacher(s) and make idols out of their false prophets. "Ooo! Aaah! Wow! Amen!" they say as their mouths drool with false wonder and emotionalism when it's not even God who is speaking through them.

Just to be clear, I do not despise the authentic prophetic, for I have been a beneficiary of it throughout the many years of my life and ministry. I believe strongly in the Ephesians 4:11 ministry gift of the authentic prophet. But most of what I'm seeing and hearing today is not that. Instead, it's a cheap imitation at best. It's false. It's highly manipulative. Worst of all, it is deceptive and misleads multitudes of Christians who have itching ears for sweet-tooth messages and possess no discernment. Many of these poor souls lack the fear of God and a genuine love for the truth, so they are easy targets for the enemy and those self-promoting foxes (cunning and crafty; Luke 13:32, Ezek. 13:4) who peddle the false prophetic. The landscape of Christianity today is filled with such. They are tares that must be separated from the wheat.

There are two main sides of the false prophetic. One is the sugary, dainty prophecies that only prophesy "peace, peace" (Ezek. 13:10, 16) and the other is the gloom and doom kind that usually only speak of judgment and wrath, falsely implying that God is angry with everyone.

What the Lord is really saying in this hour is what we need to hear. And yes, I realize He can be saying many different things through many different vessels, but there is a true and a false. There is a soulish and then there is the spiritual. The Lord rebuked the false prophets throughout Israel's history as He did through the prophet Ezekiel:

"And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy out of their own heart, "Hear the word of the Lord!" Thus says the Lord God: 'Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!'"

(Ezek. 13:1-3).

(For a sobering example of this, read the entire chapter of Ezekiel 13.)

Back to the supposed prophecy from a supposed prophet from the link my friend sent me. Initially I sensed no anointing on it, but as time went on, I wavered because the individual seemed sincere, even shedding tears at one point. Why did I doubt my first impression when I did not sense the true anointing and the “check” I had in my spirit that something was not quite right? I wasn’t sure any more because I moved into the soulish realm. This is what Christians do all the time because they’re not familiar with the real anointing of the Spirit.

### **Know the True Anointing**

“But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things” (1 John 2:20).

“These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. *But the anointing* which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you” (1 John 2:27, author’s emphasis).

You can only know all things “in the anointing.” I cannot always explain to you what the anointing is, but I can sure tell you what it ain’t. That anointing is simply the Holy Spirit who abides in every true believer. It’s also important that we are established in the Word and know the whole counsel of God, but have you ever thought of the fact that the early Christians didn’t have a full Bible yet as we do? The Comforter, whom Jesus left us, is all they knew. In fact, the apostle John was so bold to tell these early believers, “They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us” (1 John 2:19). Sounds pretty denominational and self-centered, doesn’t it? But back then they knew one another by the Spirit. They discerned the true from the false by the anointing.

Notice in verse 27 that John said that we don't need anyone to teach us. Now that sounds pretty arrogant, too, doesn't it? But he's not saying we don't need to be taught, for God had placed teachers in the body of Christ. What he's saying is to let the anointing teach you while men speak.

Before I minister the Word of God I will sometimes say: "It's not important what I say. What's important is what the Holy Spirit says while I'm speaking." See the difference?

When I was listening to the aforementioned video of this supposed prophet, I disconnected from the anointing within me. I yielded more to my soul and emotions and was fooled.

Believers today need to familiarize themselves with the true anointing of the Holy Spirit and be around it. Quit putting your faith in the wisdom of men and put more faith in the power of God. {eoa}

**Bert Farias'** books are forerunners to personal holiness, the move of God and the return of the Lord. They also combat the departure from the faith and turning away from the truth we are seeing today. *The Tumultuous 2020s and Beyond* is his latest release to help believers navigate through the new decade and emerge as an authentic remnant. Other materials/resources are available on his website, Holy Fire Ministries and YouTube channel. You can follow him personally on Facebook, his Facebook ministry page or Twitter.

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# Are You Still Confused About the Israeli-Hamas Conflict?

While fueling his vehicle at a gas station near Abu Ghosh, Israel, Calev Myers was shook by a huge explosion. Turning around to observe what he thought was construction activity, Myers instead saw pillars of smoke rising into the air as sirens blared and people ran for cover.

Over the next few days Myers, president and executive chairman of the Alliance to Reinforce Israel's Security and Economy (ARISE), observed a barrage of missiles over Tel Aviv and even in his own neighborhood. The display reminded him of the Star Spangled Banner's stanza, "And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air."

"It was like something from a *Star Wars* movie; literally, just hundreds of explosions as these rockets are being fired at us from the Gaza Strip," Myers said. "This is a very serious situation," Myers said, speaking of the 11 day period of civil unrest in Israel.

"Unfortunately, some of our Jewish citizens forget that there are Arab Israelis who really have nothing to do with Hamas, and have nothing to do with the current violence that's perpetrated against Israel, and they've been angrily demonstrating against their Arab neighbors.

"It's a very serious situation both with being attacked externally from Hamas in Gaza, then also with the civil unrest within Israel," Myers said.

As a lawyer living in Israel, Myers defends both Jews and Palestinians and prays for peace. He possesses a solid understanding of the conflict, which cultivated over a 70-year period: beginning in 1948 when Israel was reborn as the Jewish state.

Amid the missiles soaring overhead, blaring air-raid sirens, Israel's Iron Dome intercepting rockets, Myers recorded a video to thank supporters for the prayers and, as he often does, provides context for the conflict. Anybody who desires a better understanding of the conflict is invited to watch, Myers said.

"There is some hope I would say," Myers said. "Within Israel, I can tell you as a resident of the Judean Hills, I received an invitation to a solidarity rally in which our Arab Israeli neighbors from Abu Ghosh intend to do a rally together with the Jewish communities in this area.

The rally is intended "to say that we are standing together as Jewish Israeli Arabs against the inter-ethnic and inter-religious violence, and we want to live together in peaceful coexistence. So there is another voice coming out in the Israeli society today, which gives a ray of hope," Myers said.

Asking for prayer, Myers said, "I know that many of you do pray for Jerusalem because we're instructed in the Psalms, in the Scriptures, to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. I so much appreciate your prayers and your support," Myers said.

"We're thankful for that. We're thankful that He who keeps Israel will not slumber or sleep. Thank you for tracking and praying for us," Myers concluded. {eoa}

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# A Reporter Turned Humanitarian Continues Fight Against Human Trafficking 20 Years Later

It was May 26, 2001, and journalist Diana Scimone was on assignment in Mumbai, India. Early one evening her contact took her through Mumbai's red-light district, one of the largest in Asia, and pointed to a second-floor window.

"Do you see the cages?" he asked.

"Cages?" Diana repeated with horror. "What's in them?"

"Five-year-old girls."

Diana wanted to throw up. As a journalist she'd been to dozens of countries covering everything from starving refugees in Sudan to people living under the brutal dictatorship in Zimbabwe to throw-away babies abandoned at an orphanage in China.

She had seen a lot—but never cages that held little girls.

Her contact explained that little girls are smuggled across the border from Nepal and held in cages for 30 days. They're raped, tortured, starved and urinated on until they no longer have a will to rebel or run.

Only then are they fit to be sold as child sex slaves.

The contact said Diana could take a picture but not to let the pimps see her or they'd take her camera.

"I got my photo," Diana says, "and I call it the photo that changed my life because I couldn't stop thinking about what

I'd seen."

She learned there are millions of girls like the ones in those cages. They're raped for profit 20 or 30 times a night—night after night. They're not just in India and Nepal but all over the world, including every city in the United States.

Within a few years, Diana left journalism to start the Born2Fly Project to stop child trafficking. Back then, the few anti-trafficking organizations that existed focused on rescuing victims. "Rescues are absolutely necessary," Diana says, "but at the same time we have to cut off the supply-line of children or we'll never stop the traffic. So we set a goal to reach kids before the traffickers do."

Diana worked with a team of educators, illustrators and designers to create a kid-friendly trafficking-prevention program: a wordless book (so that kids anywhere in the world can read it) and companion curriculum. She tested it in five countries, then uploaded it to Born2Fly's website as a free download.

### **"I Ran Because of What I Learned"**

Today Born2Fly is the global leader in trafficking prevention for young children. More than 1,100 organizations and individuals have registered to teach the program in 65 countries from Albania to Zambia.

"And they teach it in very creative ways," Diana says. "In Nepal, for example, our partners started Mothers Against Trafficking clubs. Moms go to remote villages in the Himalayas teaching other moms about the lies that traffickers tell to lure their daughters."

A church in the U.S. teaches Born2Fly every summer as part of an equine therapy camp for kids. In Romania, a community center for at-risk girls not only taught Born2Fly but the girls helped translate the curriculum. In Uganda, pastors

organized a city-wide children's parade to kick off teaching Born2Fly to protect their kids. In India, a radio broadcaster turned the storyline from the Born2Fly wordless book into a 10-episode radio program that aired to 80 million listeners a week.

As a result, countless kids have been saved from a life of horror. "A girl in Nepal who'd been through the Born2Fly program was being recruited by a trafficker," Diana says. "She told us, 'I ran because of what I learned.' We hear this over and over all around the world."

### **Reaching Kids Before the Traffickers Do**

To commemorate the 20-year anniversary of taking the photo that changed her life, Diana tracked down the contact who showed her the cages two decades ago. He still works to fight child trafficking all over India.

"In most of India, girls are not valued, so they're killed or abandoned at birth," Diana explains, "but my contact told me about an area where there's a celebration whenever a girl is born—because her parents know they can sell her. The more girls, the wealthier the family. They actually have brothels in their homes and even go to neighboring areas to steal newborn girls from hospitals."

Four years ago her contact's organization built an academy and home for these girls—40 girls live in the home and 200 more attend classes. "Without this protection," Diana says, "these girls would be highly at risk for being trafficked by their own families. It truly fulfills our mission to reach kids before the traffickers do, so to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the photo, we're launching a 10-day campaign to raise one year of operating expenses for the academy and home—\$125,000. We have a \$50,000 match so everything up to that amount is doubled."

The campaign begins today and ends June 4. Donations can be

made at .

“I couldn’t help the little girls in the cages I saw 20 years ago,” Diana says, “but we can keep others all over the world from the same horror—by reaching them before the traffickers do.” {eoa}

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## **How Bob Kilpatrick Wrote ‘In My Life, Lord, Be Glorified’ as a Private Worship Song**

When he wrote the song, “In My Life, Lord, Be Glorified,” in 1976, Bob Kilpatrick didn’t intend for it to be sung publicly. On a recent episode of the *Strang Report* podcast, Kilpatrick told me he only had wanted it to be a prayer to be shared between three people—himself, his wife, Cindy, and Jesus.

But because she was so deeply touched by the song, Cindy convinced him that it was a song for the masses. She said to him, “You don’t understand. That song is a gift from God to His people. And if you don’t sing it, you’re going to have to answer for that.”

Not wanting to be held eternally accountable for withholding his talents and something so precious and powerful from God’s people, Kilpatrick recorded the song. The song has impacted millions, and, more than four and a half decades later, the song continues to touch the hearts and lives of people around the world.

“That [1976] was quite a year, and the song just took off,” says Kilpatrick, now an author and a speaker at churches and conferences around the world. “I mean, we had nothing then, and I didn’t know anything about the music business. I didn’t really know anything about what I was doing. I was making it up as I went along.

“When I sang the song, a friend of mine heard it and said he wanted to sing it at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California. He took it down there and, as their worship leader, sang it every Saturday night for two years. Karen Lafferty, a Christian musician, heard it and she said she wanted to take the song with her over to Europe, and she did.

“All of a sudden, we were getting letters from all over the world asking to this song. I was completely taken aback by it,” Kilpatrick continued. “Tommy Coombs from Maranatha Music contacted me and said, ‘We love your song, and we’d like to use it on our next praise album.’ We put together some contracts, and so, Tommy did a great favor for us.

“I was ready to give the thing away,” Kilpatrick recalls.

“And he said, ‘No, you’re going to be the publisher on this.’ That’s what made it possible for us to stay in the ministry and to continue singing and blessing these little churches in Northern California. And, I’m tremendously thankful God has been faithful to guide us all along the way, in this song and in the publishing business. Everything about it has been remarkable.”

Bob went on to write another classic gospel tune called “Here I Am (Send Me to the Nations).” He is also known for songs like “God is Good,” “Won by One,” “Sold Out and Radical” and “I Will Not Be Ashamed.”

His song “Bring Them Home” was sung at Mother Teresa’s funeral service in Calcutta, India, in 1997.

Bob began full-time ministry at age 17, and he has co-labored with a veritable “Who’s Who” roster, including people like Jack Hayford, Corrie ten Boom, Michael W. Smith, Lincoln Brewster, Anne Graham Lotz, Keith Green, Phil Keaggy and Andre Crouch. He is an ordained minister, and was the third inductee into the Assemblies of God Hall of Honor.

Bob and Cindy have remained in California, and he’s convinced that revival is coming soon to that state and to the rest of the nation.

“Because of everything that has happened in California, we ought to get out, but we’re staying because of the new revival that is going to hit the West Coast,” Kilpatrick said. “God answers prayer and He listens to us when we pray. He is willing, more and more, to bless His people and to bless His world.”

For more of this revealing interview with Bob Kilpatrick, listen to the entire episode of the *Strang Report* at this link. Be sure to subscribe to the *Strang Report* on Apple Podcasts or your favorite podcast platform for more words that will inspire and challenge you in the power of the Holy Spirit. {eoa}

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## **Why Israel Needs You—and You Need Israel**

As you’ve seen in recent weeks, right now, Israel is in great need. God definitely wants you to be a difference-maker in the

lives of our Jewish brothers and sisters.

Terrorist attacks in the Holy Land and antisemitic hate crimes in America and around the world are still happening every day. The Lord is calling you, the church, Christians everywhere to rise up in prayer and with vocal support for God's chosen people.

And as you recognize the signs of the times, with the approach of the Lord's return, a line is being drawn in the sand to separate who loves Israel and will stand with the nation and who won't.

God called Ezekiel, and He is calling you too: "Son of man, I have made you a watchman to the house of Israel" (Ezek. 3:17a).

Here are five reasons to answer the call to stand with Israel as a modern-day watchman:

**1. Because the Jewish people have suffered enough.** The Holocaust was only among the most recent instances. New terror threats continue to evolve even as you read this article.

**2. Because God established Israel as the Holy Land and gave it to the Jewish people forever, beginning with Abraham.** (See Gen. 17:8.)

**3. Because our Jewish brothers and sisters are in danger.** They are caught in the crosshairs of the hostile terror groups and antagonistic countries around the world. Even many in the USA believe one Jewish nation is one too many.

**4. Because there is a perilous rise in hate, hostility and antisemitic attitudes toward anyone Jewish.** Yet while so many detest them, God loves them dearly, as it says in Zechariah 2:8b (NLT) "Anyone who harms you harms my most precious possession."

**5. Because according to Romans 11, we are Judeo-Christians**

**grafted into Israel.** We are their brothers and sisters in faith.

Now here's the kicker: Israel not only needs you; you also need Israel—that is if you desire to live a blessed life and fulfill end-times prophecy. God's first promise and His eternal promise is this: "I will bless those who bless you [Israel]" (Gen. 12:3a).

When you stand with Israel and support the Jewish people, you are not only doing the right thing as a watchman, you are also setting yourself up to receive an abundant blessing of the Lord. Will you stand with the nation of Israel? Tune into our latest podcast episode of *Standing With Israel* on the Charisma Podcast Network as Pastor Larry Huch answers the question, *Where Are We on God's Calendar?—What Are the Signs?* If you would like to go further, we will send you his latest book, *The Seven Living Prophecies*, for your gift of any amount. Your gift will go toward supporting Holocaust survivors and the elderly in Israel. Click here to receive your copy, to bless Israel and continue to discover your role in God's end-times plan. {eoa}

**Pastor Larry Huch** is the host of *Standing With Israel* podcast and has become a recognized authority and acclaimed writer on the Hebrew roots of our Christian faith. He's diving into his latest book, *The Seven Living Prophecies* on his new podcast. Along with his wife, Tiz, their television program, *New Beginnings* with Pastors Larry and Tiz Huch, is broadcast weekly to millions of homes. Their dynamic ministry spans almost 40 years and is continuing to have a global impact. Connect with Larry at and on Facebook, Instagram or YouTube.

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# All Across America States Are Challenging Abortion Laws

The Supreme Court of the United States will hear an abortion case from Jackson Women's Health Organization that could overturn the Roe v. Wade decision allowing women to terminate their pregnancy. Statistics from one pro-life organization shows since the 1973 ruling became law more than 62 million children in the womb have been eliminated. This number is still climbing.

In 2018, Mississippi passed a law to ban all abortions after 15 weeks, with exceptions for medical emergencies and significant fetus abnormalities. Lower courts blocked the ban, citing past Supreme Court rulings, and they now seek to further challenge "whether states are permitted to ban abortions before a fetus can survive outside the womb." Proceedings are expected to begin sometime in fall 2021 and conclude in summer 2022.

This SCOTUS case was announced around the same time Texas Governor Greg Abbot signed a fetal heartbeat bill that criminalizes abortion procedures six weeks into pregnancy. The bill, set to become law in September this year, also "grants citizens the right to sue doctors who perform abortions past that point." A Texas city also made headlines earlier this month when a majority vote was cast in favor of designating the territory a "Sanctuary City for the Unborn."

Governor Abbot's bill is causing concern among pro-choice advocates. The Center for Reproductive Rights said, "This bill essentially opens the floodgates to allow anyone who is hostile to abortion to sue doctors and clinics." An open

letter was also signed by 200 Texas physicians expressing concerns that “the law exposes doctors to the risks of ‘frivolous lawsuits that threaten our ability to provide healthcare.’”

According to Planned Parenthood’s most recent audited financial statement, total assets and liabilities for 2019 topped over \$4.7 million. The 2019-2020 annual report shows “healthcare” services were provided to 2.4 million patients. Of that number, 395,000 unintended pregnancies were “averted by contraceptive services.” During the pandemic, the organization increased its push to aid homebound clients, offering tele-health appointments and counseling over digital platforms. Under the sex education section, a spotlight on global efforts shows million people were reached through virtual learning sessions and video resources. One spotlight photo features the face of a smiling, pre-teen girl. {eoa}

*For more than a decade, **Tiffany Benson’s** passion for writing has exceeded most of her interests. When she’s not catching up on politics or watching documentaries, she enjoys journaling, fiction and contributing to her blog: .*

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## **The Inspiring Faith of an Australian Gospel Worker Detained in North Korea**

If it was a crime to tell other people about Jesus, would there be enough evidence to find you guilty as charged?

In North Korea it is a crime to tell others about Jesus, and Australian John Short was charged and put on trial.

Short is an Australian gospel worker who was detained in North Korea after depositing gospel tracts outside a Buddhist temple during a tourist visit inside the “hermit kingdom.” You can hear him tell the amazing story on *Forbidden Faith: Inspiring Conversations with Persecuted Christians* on the Charisma Podcast Network.

In spite of pressure and physical discomfort, Short refused to give in to fear. He says there isn’t room for both faith and fear in the heart at the same time—so he chose faith instead of fear. Short was encouraged by the example of persecuted Chinese Christians with whom he had ministered and fellowshipped during many years serving the body of Christ in China.

Listen as John shares about his experience being interrogated every morning and evening for days on end, including being forced to write a detailed summary of his activities during every year of his life (he was 75 at the time of his arrest).

In addition to John’s side of the story, listeners can hear John’s wife, Karen, tell what it was like to have no word from John during his 15-day detainment. In this special bonus episode of *Forbidden Faith* with Karen Short, you’ll also hear about the powerful impact the spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting made not only in John and Karen’s spiritual lives but in those around them as well.

Listen now to hear John share his experience—and God’s faithfulness—while he was a prisoner in North Korea.

You can find out more information about what following Christ is like for Christians in North Korea through Voice of the Martyrs’ 2021 Global Prayer Guide. The Global Prayer Guide is a full-color book with country summaries on 60 hostile areas and restricted nations where the Voice of the Martyrs

currently serves persecuted Christians. For each country, readers get a general overview of the situation for Christians, who the primary persecutors are, what it means to follow Christ in that country, how difficult it is to get Bibles and a summary of VOM's ongoing work there.

Request your free copy of VOM's 2021 Global Prayer Guide now and listen to inspiring conversations with persecuted Christians on *Forbidden Faith* today. {eoa}

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## **Compassion Evangelism Impacts Millions for the Kingdom Worldwide**

The story of the five loaves and two fish isn't simply one of Doug Stringer's favorite passages in the Bible. It has become an instruction manual for the human compassion ministry he founded nearly three decades ago—Somebody Cares America/International.

A small organization with only eight regularly-paid staff in its Houston, Texas, office and limited financial resources, Somebody Cares follows the principles Jesus implemented in biblical times to turn a little into abundance to help the poor, the destitute and those devastated by natural disasters.

It has become known as a coalition and network of

organizations and churches impacting communities through prayer initiatives, compassion outreaches, leadership training and responding in times of crisis.

From Houston to the four corners of the world, from urban to foreign missions, from inner cities to unreached people groups, Somebody Cares helps to transform lives through united efforts of prayer, tangible expressions of Christ and community transformation through kingdom collaborations. In what has become known in SCAI's circles as "compassion evangelism," the organization and its network of ministries and churches extends God's tangible love in the form of food, clothing, shelter, financial resources and the comfort of the gospel of Jesus Christ to those hungry for a better life.

Although Stringer's compassion ministry began in the early 1980s, Somebody Cares was birthed as its own entity in 1994.

Following the story in Matthew 14—when Jesus fed more than 5,000 men, not including women and children, with only five loaves of bread and two fish—Stringer doesn't concern himself about a lack of resources when faced with what looks in the natural to be an insurmountable task to help those in need.

He remembers what Jesus did for the 5,000 and how he did it—and then he puts his full trust in God to come through.

"You look at what Jesus said. He said, 'feed them,'" Stringer says, referring to Matthew 14:16 (NLT). "And then the disciples said, 'We don't have anything. How can we feed them?' The point is, Jesus didn't ask them, do we have enough? He didn't ask them about what they had; he said, 'feed them.' And that is what we are committed to.

"For us, we're simply being obedient, and simple obedience is the highest form of worship," Stringer continues. "The first time the word worship is ever used in Scripture is not in the context of singing or with instruments. It's a context of obedience. If we simply just take what we have and offer

thanksgiving, God will multiply the loaves and the fishes. After He did that, they had more than enough. It is a principle we have seen everywhere.

“It’s compassion, but you don’t just do compassion without having the wisdom of God or the heart of God.” According to Stringer, “It’s about being a part of something bigger than yourself. It’s not about who gets a pat on the back or who gets the credit. It’s just about helping people, and when you do that, you see the kingdom advanced. People’s lives are changed, impacted, and you ultimately leave equity for God’s kingdom. That’s when people will become more curious to the gospel. If you see the tangibility of the gospel, then the loaves and fishes principle goes into full force.”

Stringer and his team are fully aware they cannot fulfill that mission on their own merit. If they are to leave “kingdom equity,” as Stringer calls it, in the areas they serve, they must rely on other organizations and churches to partner alongside Somebody Cares to bring God’s tangible love to those who desperately need it.

With limited staff in Houston, carrying out the organization’s kingdom commitment would seem impossible. But Stringer says we serve the God of the impossible, and it’s not simply about what happens in Houston.

The entire vision of SCAI is based upon what he calls “relational equity.” It’s the relationships Stringer has built with church and ministry leaders over the past 40 years that has allowed SCAI to grow exponentially.

Another important relationship Stringer cultivated many years ago was with Paul Tan, the senior pastor of City Blessing Churches in Los Angeles and the president and apostle of City Blessing Churches worldwide.

Still another crucial relationship Stringer formed is with Jack Hayford, the former senior pastor of The Church on the

Way in Van Nuys, California, and former president of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. Hayford invited Stringer to speak at a Love LA pastor's gathering that year, and that trip helped Stringer to network with other attending pastors and ministry leaders and to ignite their interest in SCAI's mission.

Stringer also connected with Daniel Bernard, a former missionary to Nigeria who returned to the Tampa Bay, Florida area. He started Bay of the Holy Spirit, a network of churches and ministries that realized Somebody Cares Houston was a model they could implement in their area. In 1997, Bernard contacted Stringer and asked if they could officially become a chapter and called it Somebody Cares Tampa Bay. He invited Stringer to meet with 120 pastors to officially launch Somebody Cares Tampa Bay.

Stringer also connected with Marlene Yeo, a pastor who worked with homeless children in the New England area. Yeo is now the executive director of Somebody Cares New England.

"It's all about relational equity, mending the net. Every one of our chapters is autonomous," Stringer says. "They have a license and an agreement with us to carry on our core values and not to misuse them. It becomes a 'spiritual fathering' or mentoring. We are just the command center in Houston."

Since 1994, chapters have been established worldwide in Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Fiji and Aberdeen, Scotland. In the U.S., chapters have been birthed in Puerto Rico, San Antonio, Texas; Haverhill, Massachusetts; Baltimore, Maryland; Denver, Colorado; Jasper and Newton Counties in Texas; Tampa Bay, Florida; St. Augustine, Florida; Citrus County, Florida; Pasco County, Florida and Hernando County, Florida.

SCAI also has affiliates called Love Botswana in Africa; Love Bought International, ministering to orphans in Colombia; and Coreluv for Orphans in Haiti. SCAI has had significant

ministry and ongoing relationships in countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Middle East. It also has centers in Texas cities and regions like Brownsville, Denison, the Rio Grand Valley and Brazos Valley.

Save Our Streets Ministries in Bryan, Texas, also helps to facilitate Somebody Cares Brazos Valley. Medical Missions International is an official affiliate as well as many others.

“With that many affiliates and chapters, you can see why the needs of hundreds of thousands are met,” Stringer says.

Because “we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28, MEV), some SCAI chapters have arisen out of crisis situations. After Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico in September 2017, Stringer formed a strong relationship with Rey Matos, pastor of Catacumba 5 church in Anasco.

After that deadly Category 5 storm struck Puerto Rico, Stringer partnered with Matos, and through the FEMA office there and several other disaster relief organizations, sent shiploads of resources and medical equipment to help the devastated people on the island. Some parts of Puerto Rico are still recovering from the storm, and through Stringer’s relationship with Matos, people are still receiving aid spearheaded by SCAI.

### Quick Response

When a need is identified or a crisis situation arises, that’s when the network of ministries and churches go to work with lightning efficiency. Conference and Zoom calls are set up with Stringer and his teams to discover exactly what the needs are, and strategies are established to meet those needs, including how the costs will be covered.

As soon as strategies to attack the need are put in place, churches and ministries are contacted, and God’s works are set

in motion.

“It’s incredible that, most times, we start with nothing, but we’re able to find men and women of peace in communities who really want to help,” Stringer says. “People come out of the woodwork, so to speak, to serve. So, it all starts with availability.

“That’s when you start leveraging the local churches and people in the communities.” Stringer continues, “Every hurricane, every natural disaster that we are called about, it’s amazing how so many churches want to come alongside and help, some as distribution centers. Resources just seem to come pouring out.”

Stringer says, “We get the inertia, the momentum, going. This is another place where you see Jesus’ principle of the loaves and the fishes get started. The need becomes identified, and then you simply become obedient to God’s Word, and you trust that He is the one who is going to meet the need. It’s an incredible principle.”

## Disaster Relief

While compassion evangelism was originally intended to be the staple focus of Somebody Cares, the organization has become well known for its efforts in disaster relief. When the Indian Ocean tsunami wreaked major havoc in 14 countries in 2004, Somebody Cares was on the ground soon after.

When the 2010 catastrophic magnitude-7.0 earthquake struck the island nation of Haiti, Somebody Cares organized relief efforts from distributing food to coordinating the building of temporary houses for numerous families whose homes were destroyed by the quake. Thousands of hot meals were provided along with groceries and clean water, as well as bringing encouragement to hundreds of pastors.

SCAI has been instrumental in helping many other cities and

regions recover from destructive natural disasters, including Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, Hurricane Rita in September 2005, Hurricane Harvey in August 2017 and Hurricane Laura in August 2020.

More recently, SCAI responded to cries for help during the harsh winter storm that hit its own home state of Texas in February 2021. The storm caused major power outages, resulting in burst pipes throughout the state, which cascaded into water outages. That, coupled with icy roads, also shut down businesses and schools.

In the months following, many remained without drinkable or running water, and families were on two-month waiting lists for plumbers and plumbing supplies. Somebody Cares equipped churches and ministries to distribute food, water and other supplies to individuals and families who suffered in the aftermath of the unusual winter storm.

SCAI brought in truckloads of bottled water from the Midwest Food Bank to distribute to families. It also purchased plumbing supplies from out of state to fix leaks for those on fixed incomes, those who lost wages and those who struggled without insurance coverage for the water damage incurred.

### **Everyday Compassion**

Through strong kingdom relationships and networking with organizations that thrive on human compassion, Jesus empowers SCAI to meet felt needs around the world, not only during natural disasters—which Somebody Cares is most known for—but also in everyday life.

For example, in 2008, SCAI learned from Pastor Suliasi Kurolo of World Harvest Center, its facilitator for Somebody Cares Fiji, that there were no dialysis machines in all of Fiji. People who needed dialysis had to travel to Australia or other countries for treatment.

Somebody Cares Vice President Jodie Chiricosta put out the word through their network of the need for a dialysis machine in Fiji and, within days, a ministry partner had provided three fully refurbished machines with spare parts. At about the same time, Stringer had been invited to minister at the City Blessings Churches in Los Angeles, pastored by Tan, who is also founder of the Indonesian Relief Fund and World Blessing Foundation.

Stringer and Tan connected, and City Blessing offered to pay half of the shipping bill for a container to deliver food, medicine and the three dialysis machines to Fiji. Another food distribution organization in Georgia also helped to defer the costs of delivering the machines.

“That’s how the kingdom works—on relationships,” Stringer says. “The machines arrived in Fiji and were donated to the Ministry of Health by the churches of Fiji—which opened new doors of ministry in the nation and provided tangible help to those needing dialysis.”

### **A Beacon of Hope Through COVID-19**

Somebody Cares has even made its compassionate presence known through the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year. Stringer says out of its Houston office and their “little ministry,” SCAI has distributed well over \$400,000 not only to local residents in need, but also sent additional funds to other cities like Baltimore and regions such as New England and sent some assistance to the Navajo Nation. This does not include other funds sent out to help victims of other disasters.

When the pandemic struck, at-risk children who normally attended school and who depended upon school lunches for a meal every day, began to miss out on those lunches when they were ordered to learn from home. The director of Somebody Cares Baltimore reached out to restaurant owners in the area who were also missing out on income because of the COVID-19

restrictions and, because people identified the need, the need quickly became met.

“We have helped people who have been affected by COVID-19, those who have lost income, with their utilities and with rental assistance,” Stringer says. “That’s not even counting the hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of resources we gave away to medical professionals, first responders, community outreach agencies and churches to assist with responses across the country.

“It’s so amazing how God has taken what little loaves and fishes we have,” Stringer says, “The biggest thing we’ve learned through all of this is that if we offer what we have on our own, we’ll never have enough. But, if we offer what we have with all of our thanksgiving to God, we always end up with more than enough. God tends to multiply the fish and the loaves we have when we offer it with an attitude of gratitude.”

### **Compassion Evangelism Still Going Strong**

Stringer says in order to meet the felt needs around the world, SCAI must remain continually creative and stay connected with those who have the same passion to not only provide for felt needs but to spread the gospel of Christ so that Jesus’ mission of the salvation of every man and woman becomes a reality.

“When I first started,” Stringer continues, “I realized that my heart for compassion was not about just doing good works, which become dead works. My heart for compassion was to find strategic, tangible ways to express Christ. When you meet needs and touch the heart, it opens an opportunity to minister to people beyond the arguing of the mind.

“We’ve had so many stories and testimonies over the years,” Stringer says. “Doing good works can be cumbersome and exhausting. You can have compassion burnout if you are not

being fueled by the presence of God. From the very beginning 40 years ago, before Somebody Cares came to fruition, I knew right away that this ministry had to be based in prayer, which is communication with God. It had to be fueled out of his presence.

“I realized that everything we do,” Stringer says, “has to be prepared in a place of prayer and a place of worship in the presence of the Lord so that when we are able to minister to people, it comes out of the overflow of his presence rather than just trying to make something happen ourselves.

“And in that place,” Stringer says, “is when God will take what little you have and multiply it through relationships with those who are like-minded. That’s when the stories of the loaves and the fishes really comes alive.”

**Shawn Akers** *is content development editor with Charisma Media.*

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## **‘The Fellowship’ CEO: ‘We Have to Stand Strong Against This Hatred’**

Amid what seems to be exponential growth of antisemitism around the world, Yael Eckstein remains steadfast about her kingdom mission.

As the president and CEO of the *International Fellowship of Christians and Jews*, Eckstein knows how crucial it is to continue to not only build bridges between Christians and Jews, but also to help Jews escape poverty and antisemitism, as well as return them to their biblical homeland. With funded humanitarian assistance, *The Fellowship* has touched the lives of millions of Jews in Israel and worldwide in a culture where hatred and disdain for their people is increasing rapidly.

Comprised of independent organizations in Canada, the U.S. and Israel, *The Fellowship* collectively raises over \$165 million annually. Eckstein oversees all programs for *The Fellowship* while serving as the international spokesperson for the organization. She is also the host of the *Nourish Your Biblical Roots* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network.

Her work to combat antisemitism around the world is tireless, including in Israel, where a ceasefire was recently declared for yet another conflict with Hamas that reared its ugly head for approximately 11 days.

“The violence that we’re seeing, we thought we were done with it,” Eckstein told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “We haven’t seen this in a long time. I don’t know God’s plans, but I have to believe that somehow it’s going to bring some good; maybe even to remind the Jewish people without assimilation how Israel is their only home. They can’t forget their identity; they can’t forget who they are.

“But I think it’s all of our responsibilities to really stand strong against this hatred that is spreading like wildfire. I believe if we don’t get it under control, it will burn all of us down as a people of faith. ... Everyone’s prayers are Israel’s weapons of mass destruction. That’s why we’re protected. Not one person in Israel takes one prayer for granted. So, thank you.”

Additionally, *The Fellowship* is more than doing its part to help Jewish people make *Aliyah* to Israel. On a daily basis, *The Fellowship* helps people from places like the former Soviet Union and Ukraine, South America and France to escape antisemitism.

“The amazing thing is that there were 4,000 rockets falling on Israel, which is the size of New Jersey, and you had Jewish people saying, ‘Israel is the safest place for me.’ That’s how you know how bad antisemitism has gotten.”

For more about *The Fellowship* and Yael Eckstein, listen to the entire episode of *Greenelines* here, and tune in to *Nourish Your Biblical Roots* with Yael Eckstein on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

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