

# Why Is the Obama Administration Putting Government Monitors in Newsrooms?

The Obama administration's Federal Communication Commission (FCC) is poised to place government monitors in newsrooms across the country in an absurdly draconian attempt to intimidate and control the media.

Before you dismiss this assertion as utterly preposterous (we all know how that turned out when the tea party complained that it was being targeted by the IRS), this bombshell of an accusation comes from an actual FCC commissioner.

FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai reveals a brand new Obama administration program that he fears could be used in "pressuring media organizations into covering certain stories."

As Commissioner Pai explains in the *The Wall Street Journal*:

"Last May the FCC proposed an initiative to thrust the federal government into newsrooms across the country. With its 'Multi-Market Study of Critical Information Needs,' or CIN, the agency plans to send researchers to grill reporters, editors and station owners about how they decide which stories to run. A field test in Columbia, S.C., is scheduled to begin this spring.

"The purpose of the CIN, according to the FCC, is to ferret out information from television and radio broadcasters about 'the process by which stories are selected' and how often stations cover "critical information needs,' along with 'perceived station bias' and 'perceived responsiveness to

underserved populations.'”

In fact, the FCC is now expanding the bounds of regulatory powers to include newspapers, which it has absolutely no authority over, in its new government monitoring program.

The FCC has apparently already selected eight categories of “critical information” that “it believes local newscasters should cover.”

That’s right, the **Obama administration** has developed a formula of what it believes the free press should cover, and it is going to send government monitors into newsrooms across America to stand over the shoulders of the press as they make editorial decisions.

This poses a monumental danger to constitutionally protected free speech and freedom of the press.

Every major repressive regime of the modern era has begun with an attempt to control and intimidate the press.

As Thomas Jefferson so eloquently said, “Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost.”

The federal government has absolutely no business determining what stories should and should not be run, what is critical for the American public and what is not, whether it perceives a bias, and whose interests are and are not being served by the free press.

It’s an unconscionable assault on our free society.

Imagine a government monitor telling Fox News it needed to cover stories in the same way as MSNBC or Al-Jazeera. Imagine an Obama Administration official walking into the editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal* and telling it that the American public would be better served if it is stopped reporting on the IRS scandal or maybe that reporting on

Obamacare glitches is driving down enrollment.

It's hard to imagine anything more brazenly Orwellian than government monitors in newsrooms.

Is it any wonder that the U.S. now ranks 46th in the world for freedom of the press? Reporters Without Borders called America's precipitous drop of 13 places in its recent global rankings "one of the most significant declines" in freedom of the press in the world.

Freedom of the press is proudly extolled in the **First Amendment**, yet our nation now barely makes the top 50 for media freedom.

We cannot allow the unfathomable encroachment on our free speech and freedom of the press to continue.

We've seen, and defeated, this kind of attempt to squelch **free speech** before in the likes of the Fairness Doctrine and the Grass-Roots Lobbying bill (incidentally one of my first projects at the ACLJ). Each one of these euphemistically named government programs is nothing more than an underhanded attempt to circumvent the Constitution and limit free speech—speech that the government finds inconvenient. They're equally unconstitutional, and they each must be defeated.

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# Life-Ending Clinic Now Euthanizing People With Chronic Depression

Belgium made international headlines last week for extending euthanasia to children. Apparently, killing terminally ill children on demand isn't quite edgy enough for the right-to-die camp. Now, a decade after legalizing **euthanasia**, the Netherlands is debating doctor-assisted suicide for depression. Yes, depression.

As if **sex-selective abortion** wasn't immoral enough—and as if opening the door to playing God at the sickbed of young children wasn't appalling enough—it may soon be more convenient to kill off people who suffer from sadness.

Launched in 2012, the Life-Ending Clinic targets people whose family doctors flat-out refuse to help them end their lives. But the clinic isn't merely helping the terminally ill go on to eternity a little sooner than planned to avoid suffering. This death dungeon is essentially murdering people who report chronic depression and don't want to wake up fighting the battle in their mind again tomorrow.

“We consider it self-evident that someone who is terminal can turn to **euthanasia**,” Life-Ending Clinic Director Steven Pleiter told *The Daily Beast*. “Now we are entering a phase in which there will be more debate about patients who are not terminally ill, among them psychiatric patients and those with dementia.”

What in the world is going on here? I understand how devastating **depression** can be. I suffered with this malady for more than a year—and spent a good part of that year in bed sleeping. I understand the thoughts of hopelessness that come with this disorder. Nevertheless, the role of physicians is to

facilitate medical miracles, not medical massacres.

“Well, they will just kill themselves anyway,” some may say. No, they probably wouldn’t. According to a Mayo Clinic study, outpatients treated for **depression** had a suicide risk of 2 percent. That compares to a 1 percent risk for the general population.

No, people who suffer from depression typically do not commit suicide. And if we make suicide as easy as inserting an IV and listening to some soothing music while a person drifts into the afterlife, we could give the depressed masses motivation to move from their bed to a gurney so doctors can end their life and roll them into the morgue.

Depression has become an epidemic around the world—according to the U.S. Census Bureau and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 10 percent of America is depressed, and it costs employers \$51 billion a year in productivity—but depression is not a new phenomenon. Elijah sat under a broom bush and prayed that he might die (1 Kings 19:4-5), but the Lord didn’t  **euthanize** him.

King David knew a thing or two about depression: “Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; my eye wastes away with grief, yes, my soul and my body! For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away” (Ps. 31:9-10). But God went on to use him in mighty ways.

But the *Daily Beast* reports the Life-Ending Clinic director thinks giving psychiatric patients a chance at assisted suicide is important.

“We are dealing with a group of patients that have no other place to go, that are also being ignored by psychiatry,” Pleiter says. “We are looking at their requests seriously, we treat them in all fairness. I believe it was a deliberate choice for the lawmakers to offer space legally, to which both

patients with physical as well as psychological problems can turn.”

If we can murder the depressed, where do we go from here? Do we end the lives of the anxious? What if we're just too stressed out to go on? Can teenagers who had a bad breakup with their boyfriend opt for assisted suicide with (or without) their parents' permission? Where does the murderous madness end and a respect for the sanctity of life begin? Apparently not in the Netherlands.

The Life-Ending Clinic gives a whole new meaning to the words *slippery slope*. When psychiatrists decide they just don't feel like listening to **depressed** patients whine anymore, they can just recommend  **euthanasia**. *The Daily Best* story ends with this sad tale: “In one particularly disturbing case a 35-year-old woman, the youngest to die since the Dutch law was introduced, got help killing herself in 2012. Excerpts of her file were published by Dutch national newspaper Trouw and read like a sad story of clinical depression. But the file also shows an extended period of hopefulness. Not enough apparently. A team of doctors decided there was no cause to wait, and ended her life.”

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## When Faith Fades Away, Love

# Abides

“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13).

When all is said and done, the message of 1 Corinthians 13 can be reduced to three attributes: faith, hope, love.

Faith in our brothers and sisters in Christ, the ones God gave us to walk this narrow path by our side.

Hope in their future and the finishing work God is doing in their lives.

Love for the body of Christ that never gives up but chooses to believe the best, hope for the best and do the best to help them be better today than they were yesterday.

But lets take these three elements to the next level.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

Faith is what enables us to believe that what we merely hope for and what we cannot yet see will one day be reality.

Hope is looking to our future with expectancy and anticipation.

Yet one day faith will fade away as we are finally able to clearly see. And all that we hoped for and anticipated will become reality. And all that is left is love.

Love.

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*her at A Little R & R where she writes about missions, marriage and family, toddler activities, and her recipes.*

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## **Fitness Program: What's Right for You?**

Designing a fitness program begins by knowing why you're working out. Are you wanting to lose weight, add shape and tone, better your health or train for competition?

It seems like most people like to exercise because they want to look better, feel better and sleep better. Either way, taking care of your temple is a good thing. Some people are better at taking care of their spiritual muscles than their physical muscles or vice-versa. In either case, here are a few things you need to think about when designing your workout routine:

- How much aerobic cardiovascular training do you need?
- How much anaerobic strength training?
- How long should your training sessions be?
- Can your body handle the additional physical stress?
- Does your current health condition affect your training?

When it comes to getting fit and healthy, the name of the game is to train and diet smarter—not harder or longer.

**1. Exercise can be a double-edged sword.** It can be both stress-reducing and stress-producing. The more intense your workout, the more stressful it is on your body and the more cortisol and adrenaline you produce. Hitting a heavy bag or a going for a hard run may help you get rid of some anxious energy, but that intense workout will elevate your stress

hormones. Can your adrenal glands handle that? Or are they already in a state of exhaustion due to all the stress in your life?

**2. Exercise is a type of physical stress.** Casual walking is exercise, but it's not that stressful. Weight training, burst training or aerobic training done incorrectly (the most common mistake) is stress-producing. Are you exercising and physically taxing a body that is already exhausted?

**3. Exercise is when you tear down the muscles.** It's called the catabolic or breakdown phase. Only about 15-20 percent of your results will come from the workout. About 70-80 percent of your results will come from diet and rest. This is termed the anabolic growth phase. Don't overemphasize the workout and undercut the need for a good diet and additional rest and sleep.

**4. The quicker you lower your stress hormones after a workout, the quicker the anabolic growth phase begins.** Don't assume your stress hormones automatically drop back to normal after your workout. If you're hustling to the shower, wolfing down a shake or meal, or speeding out the door in a constant hurry, I can almost guarantee you that your stress hormones are staying elevated—in which case you are slowing down the start of the rebuild growth phase.

**5. The more intense the workout, the more testosterone (TT) and growth hormones (GH) you produce.** These hormones help you burn fat, lose weight and keep you feeling young. This is, again, why you want to do some type of strength training or burst training: It allows you to kick up those two important hormones. Strength training doesn't have to be long—it just needs to be intense! If you don't stress the muscle, it has no reason to change. Short, intense workouts are all you may need.

FYI: When your adrenal glands are depleted and fatigued, they

are not going to produce as much TT and GH. This is why it's a good idea to measure your cortisol levels, especially if you've hit a plateau and are dealing with prolonged stress.

**6. More exercise, more stress = more rest.** Sleep and exercise are the two best ways to pump up your testosterone and growth hormones. So you have to give your body a chance to rebuild itself. Are you giving yourself additional rest to offset the additional physical demands on your body? If not, you will deplete and exhaust your adrenal glands. You want to feel tired and healthier after a good workout, not exhausted and frazzled, which happens to so many people whose adrenals are exhausted and overworked.

**7. Aerobic deficiency and anaerobic excess is a common mistake.** Performing your aerobic workout at too high an intensity level for your current level of condition turns aerobic conditioning into an anaerobic activity. This is another stress on the body. Only well-trained marathoners and tri athletes can train at 80-85 percent of the maximum heart rate and still burn fat. If that's not you, you should be training at 65-75 percent of your max heart rate. Otherwise you will be burning mostly carbs and lean muscle instead of stored body fats.

These are only a few of the things you need to consider. We haven't even discussed all the variables that come into play with regards to your health symptoms, because that will also determine how long or how intense you should workout. If you've been training and have hit that plateau and aren't feeling good after a workout, you need to think: Could your adrenal glands be exhausted?

There are so many variables to be reviewed in order to design an individualized health and fitness program. So buying a good pair of tennis shoes, joining a gym and taking a class is all great, but if you're not getting the results you expect, it would be smart to review all the variables that go into

designing a health and fitness program.

*Dr. Len Lopez is a nutrition and fitness expert and creator of the Work Horse Fitness Trainer. His background in natural medicine and strength training gives him that special insight to help those who are struggling to bring both health and fitness together. You can learn more or get a second opinion at .*

*For the original article, visit .*

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## **God's Work in Shattered Dreams**

I'm trying to get papers filed. *Trying* being the optimum word. One of my best friends says, "The difference between trying and doing is actually getting something done." I don't think I quoted that exactly, but you get the idea.

I've gotten a lot done, but sometimes I feel like I just shuffle things around. Usually when I'm organizing, I feel like I'm just moving things from one floor or room of my house to another. I'm working on it, though. I really am.

So, I decided I was going to go through a bunch of boxes and get some order back. And I found a plastic box full of pages I'd ripped out of magazines—mostly *Country Living*. Pictures of rooms, furniture arrangements and anything else I loved. I think I'd planned on making a binder of my favorite things because I found page protectors in the box as well. (Sounds like a good project for one of my creative kids!)

Looking at all the pictures brought a smile to my face. I

enjoy dreaming about, looking forward to and planning for the future, imagining wonderful things.

Recently I was sharing with a friend how when I found out about my husband's affair and knew the potential of him leaving, I imagined what our life would be like if we reconciled. I thought about how our relationship could be better than ever, how our love could be stronger, and how we could have a vital ministry to others who were struggling. When reconciliation didn't happen, God refined my vision.

Now I look forward to what God is going to do in my life in a different way. I look forward to what God is going to do in the lives of my children. I have great hopes and dreams for us all!

"Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God."  
-William Carey

I think it is part of the forgetting what lies behind and straining toward what is ahead.

"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-14, ESV).

What does God have for us? Whatever it is, God uses some interesting words to describe our journey to get it: *pressing* and *straining*.

**Pressing.** During my brief running career a few years ago, I recall at the beginning of my "training" (it is in quotes because I didn't really train well; hence the brevity of my running career) I would run increasingly longer distances, but always the first mile or so was absolute torture and the final

half-mile would seem like slogging through mud. During both of those times I'd have to keep my focus ahead and press with my whole body to move forward. It was a pressing of feet on pavement, a pressing of body into the momentum forward, a pressing of breath in and out, a pressing onward.

**Straining.** That one isn't difficult to imagine—especially with my running analogy. There was always an element of straining—and panting, plodding, trudging and wooziness. I'm not a good runner (especially with the broken foot!).

In thinking about pressing and straining in my walking (or running) out my faith, I believe having a vision is helpful. When I have something to strive for, I do better. Although with running I don't need a stop sign or a set tree to run to—in fact, I'd prefer not to have a visual because sometimes I just feel like I'll *never* get there. But if I have a vision of the end, then I enjoy running more. I imagine how I'll feel at the end, the sense of accomplishment, the joy of being done.

I think I might be a little bit like that in my spiritual life as well. I don't need to actually see where I'm going. Hey! That sounds a little like faith!

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

I think what I need is a very clear vision of what I have to look forward to—and that gets me back to the question, “What does God have for us?”

“Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance” (Heb. 9:15).

“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this

light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

“Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also” (John 14:1-3).

“And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life” (1 John 2:25).

Thinking about eternal life is all well and good. But does eternal life necessarily mean good life? I say yes—a wholehearted yes!

I believe eternal life is all things wonderful! John describes it like this:

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Rev. 21:3-4).

I don’t imagine heaven is a place of clouds, harps and wings. I believe heaven is very much like what we are familiar with in terms of earth—He does refer to it as the new heaven and the new earth. I tell my kids we will get to enjoy all the wonderful things this earth has to offer but it will be perfect! No fear, no worries, no violence, no pain. What’s not to like about that?

Recognizing what I have to look forward to helps me press on through sorrow, pain, trouble, challenges and even things that are pretty good by this world's standards to strive to live a life of peace, joy and service here.

"When the Bible speaks of the new heaven and the new earth, it is not speaking of an alternative to this world; it is speaking of the healing and restoration of this world. This gives Christians a reason to participate in restoring this fallen world. Furthermore, because Christians know that there is a perfect world coming, they don't put all their hope in the current world. Christians can sacrificially serve others because they value the things of the coming world more than the things of this world." –Tim Keller

And the most important part of heaven is Jesus.

Oh my goodness—epiphany! The vision, the goal, the hope, the joy, the thing to look forward to is *Jesus!*

"There will be little else we shall want of heaven besides Jesus Christ. He will be our bread, our food, our beauty, and our glorious dress. The atmosphere of heaven will be Christ; everything in heaven will be Christ-like: yes, Christ is the heaven of His people." –C.H. Spurgeon

I guess there is something—I mean Someone—I want to keep as my focus, my focal point as I run this faith race.

"A continual looking forward to the eternal world is not a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do." –C.S. Lewis

I pray as we all run this race we will keep our eyes on the prize, on Jesus.

**Sue Birdseye** is an author and single mom of five kids that range from 4 years old to 17 years old. Her book, *When Happily Ever After Shatters*, is in bookstores. This is adapted from

her blog, .

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## Jamie Coots' Snake Theology Was Not That Crazy, Says Secular Journalist

The death of Jamie Coots could be read as just another bit of evidence that the universe doesn't much care what you believe. Physics, biology, geology—all perk along with or without our assent.

Coots may have been the most famous of America's snake-handling **Pentecostal** preachers. He was featured last year in a reality show called *Snake Salvation*. He died after being bitten by a rattlesnake during the regular Saturday service.

According to a report in *The Wall Street Journal*, this was the ninth time he'd been bitten.

Not every snake is going to want to bite. The effects of a snakebite can vary: How big is the snake? How much venom got in? How sensitive is the victim to that particular venom? And news reports say that both Coots' father and grandfather performed the same rituals without being killed.

So Coots' grabbing the rattler wasn't quite like stepping out a window in the belief that angels would hold him up. But it was in that direction, as this bite demonstrated. Faith or no faith.

Snake handling churches all look to a few verses in the New Testament:

- Mark 16:17-18 – “And these signs shall follow them that believe ...They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them...”
- Luke 10:19 – “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”
- And Acts 28:1-6 tells a story about Paul being uninjured by a venomous snake attack.

To most people, these seem like a crazy justification to handle deadly serpents. But I evaluate these kinds of claims through Weiss’ Law of Religious Relativism: Any religion is, by definition, crazy to a nonbeliever.

That’s not to say that someone of one belief can’t appreciate the piety, values or even practices of a different belief. But those areas that depend on faith will seem irrational–crazy.

Is it crazier to believe that the creator of the universe had a son who is somehow also him and required that son to be tortured to death and resurrected to allow his creations to escape the consequences of sin–or that he would protect his faithful believers from the effects of snake venom?

From the outside, it’s a coin toss. Although gambling on the snakebite protection can have much clearer this-world consequences.

And to be fair to **Christianity**, most Christians see their snake-handling brethren as misguided. They’ve got their own proof texts, including Luke 4, where Satan tempts Jesus to jump off a roof. Old Scratch quotes **Psalms 91**:

“He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

Jesus counters with a line from Deuteronomy: “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”

Other faiths have their traditions of wonderworkers—and of warnings against putting too much stock in them. In Judaism, for instance, the Talmud warns against depending on miracles for protection from evil. And Maimonides, one of Judaism's greatest sages, said more than 800 years ago that the basic laws of the world weren't going to change even with the coming of the Messiah:

“Let no one think that in the days of the Messiah any of the laws of nature will be set aside, or any innovation will be introduced into creation. The world will follow its normal course.”

But here's another truth: Friends of mine who have attended and written about Coots' church tell me that Coots was a powerful preacher. That members of his church say it saved them from the street, from drugs, from self-destructive and evil ways. And I believe it.

I believe it because, of the many flavors of faith I've covered, I can't think of one where practitioners didn't make a believable case that their religion helped give them purpose and peace and structure against the chaos of everyday life. Muslim, Jew, Pentecostal, Brahma Kumari, Sikh—my list could go on for a while.

And every one of them would consider the **faith** claims of the other to be as crazy as most of us consider seizing a poisonous snake. Yet somehow each one apparently does some good for some people.

The *Journal* quotes another pastor who was at Coots' home Saturday: “He died for what he believed in.”

Sadly for his friends and family, the universe didn't much care.

**Jeffrey Weiss** is an award-winning reporter who covered the ins and outs of faith 'n values for more than a decade for the

Dallas Morning News. He watched the succession of popes from Rome, talked to Joe Lieberman about how his Judaism informed his politics, discussed the intricacies of Mormon theology with an apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and got along with partisans on both sides of most major denominational battles. These days, his day job is covering local education for the News.

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## Paramount: 'Noah' Survey Completely Inaccurate; Barna Research Offers the Truth

Are faith-based consumers disappointed in the upcoming *Noah* film or not? That depends on who you ask.

Paramount Pictures, distributor of Darren Aronofsky's upcoming feature film *Noah*, strongly disputes the inaccurate media story from *Variety*, who reported on a **religious** survey from Faith Driven Consumer.

The question posed asked respondents if they were "satisfied with a biblically themed movie—designed to appeal to you—which replaces the **Bible's** core message with one created by Hollywood."

The survey question that had the 98 percent response rate did not contain any reference to the film *Noah*, despite the fact that the *Variety* reporting implied that it did, and research from industry-leading firms about the upcoming epic paints a very different picture.

Nielsen's National Research Group (NRG), the industry's

decades-long standard for measuring pre-release tracking of feature films (and other entertainment offerings), is tracking *Noah* and has gauged, with still six weeks to go before the film's release and from self-defined "very religious" moviegoers, that 83 percent of those aware of *Noah* in the pre-release tracking have expressed interest in seeing film.

Others in the Christian research field, including the Barna Group, the 30-year-old research and resource company widely considered to be a leading research organization focused on the intersection of faith and culture, have had a similar response to NRG in their own pre-release research done on behalf of *Noah*, including the fact that 86 percent of Christian respondents who are aware of the film said they would recommend *Noah* to their friends.

Additionally, Barna Group's president, David Kinnaman, notes, "On our survey conducted over February 13 through February 15, we found the majority of pastors would recommend that people see the film *Noah*."

"*Noah*, from Paramount Pictures and Regency Enterprises, stars Academy Award-winner Russell Crowe in the title role in the film inspired by the epic story of courage, sacrifice and hope. The film is directed by visionary filmmaker Darren Aronofsky. Jennifer Connelly, Ray Winstone, Emma Watson, Anthony Hopkins and Logan Lerman also star. The film was written by Darren Aronofsky and Ari Handel and produced by Scott Franklin, Darren Aronofsky, Mary Parent and Arnon Milchan.

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# Are You Overdoing It on Special Occasions?

Why do special occasions seem to provide people, even Christians, with a supposed license to sin? We see it in movies, popularizing wedding “hangovers” and among “bridesmaids” and “wedding singers.” Or closer to home, the uncle who drinks too much at family gatherings.

It feels like holidays, when boiled down to reality, become nothing more than occasions to indulge for so many.

I’m not a prude, and I realize Jesus turned water into wine for wedding guests. But I don’t think He was condoning overdoing it as a form of celebration. Think about it with me. Here is a quick list of occasions that our culture has glamorized with not-so-special behaviors, giving us a mysterious hall pass from morality:

- Big-game beer fests and tailgating
- Bachelor and bachelorette parties featuring strip joints, excessive drinking and, in some cases, prostitution
- Valentine’s Day, which virtually promotes sexual activity before marriage
- St. Patrick’s Day, a saint’s celebration turned into a reason to drink too much Irish whiskey, green beer and other green libations
- Thanksgiving gluttony
- Cinco de Mayo fiestas with tequila
- Fourth of July, celebrating freedom with the freedom to party hearty
- Graduations and promotion celebrations—moving up and letting your hair down
- Halloween hijinx, giving people an excuse to eat too much candy and act out of character by pretending to be

- one, from sexy costumes to evil icons
- Birthdays parties designed to forget your age
  - Reunions that bring back the “good ol’ days”
  - Celebrating big-game wins and accomplishments with the attitude that you work hard, play hard
  - Spring and summer breaks that become breaks from morality

Have another one to add? Please use the comment section below.

We often justify these occasions by giving ourselves an extra measure of grace, which can turn into overindulgence, gluttony and debauchery.

The Bible clearly calls out these behaviors. God wants us to have a sound, sober mind to help protect us from the enemy, as written in 1 Peter 5:8. Our bodies are considered temples of God according to 1 Corinthians 6:19, and we should offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, according to Romans 12:1.

God wants us to celebrate and enjoy the blessings He’s giving us, but in a way that honors Him and each other with self-control. Remember, all good things come from God—good food, good wine, good friends, good progress, good character.

When you go into these celebrations, don’t leave Jesus behind. Go into special occasions as a lighthouse, being a properly calibrated ambassador among people who do not share your faith.

## **10 Ways to Make Special Occasions Special**

1. Reminisce past experiences (Phil. 4:8).
2. Make the meal the hero. Savor the flavors and experience of a unique restaurant.
3. Take in the ambience and the moment of a unique venue.

4. Enjoy live music and dance joyfully.
5. Capture the moments with photography.
6. Catch up with people, finding out what's really going on in their lives.
7. Recognize people for their efforts in fun ways and with unique awards. Propose a toast with the purpose of giving a blessing instead of a healthy pour.
8. Participate in respectful roasting with humor served up in grace and love. Use storytelling to recap significant moments.
9. Think of what you can give or bring, rather than what you can get out of the occasion.
10. Celebrate with a new tradition. Think of activities that get the guys (or gals) moving, such as hiking, ski trips, pick-up basketball games or beach bonfires.

## **5 Practical Tips for a Sober Celebration**

- 1. BYOB.** Bring your own beverage (alcohol-free) or healthy dishes.
- 2. Don't arrive in a state of HALT.** Recognize your vulnerability when you are Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired.
- 3. Flee temptation, and that may mean skipping the event.** But you can substitute the event by organizing your own with a healthy crowd and healthy environment that allows for a less hazy and more memorable experience.
- 4. Think about how you want to feel the next day.** Would your behavior make you or Jesus proud? Would it be what you want to be doing if He returned unannounced?
- 5. Ask God to show you how to have fun.** We're used to allowing the world to tell us how to have fun. But what if we asked Him? He created laughter, and He told us he would give us

abundant life, so why not ask Him?

Remember, God is not a killjoy, and following Him is not a drag. Sometimes we need to say no to say yes. Perhaps the hardest times to follow Him are during the celebrations of life when the world is saying, "Treat yourself; have more." But remember Jesus said in John 6:35, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty" (NIV).

**Kenny Luck**, founder of Every Man Ministries and the men's pastor at Saddleback Church, provides biblically oriented teaching and leadership for men and pastors seeking relevant, timely material that battle cultural, worldly concepts threatening men and God's men. Follow Kenny and Every Man Ministries now on Facebook, Twitter (@everyMM) and YouTube.

For the original article, visit .

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## 2014 Is the Year of the Quantum Leap

At the beginning of this year, as I was seeking the Lord regarding the season we are in, I distinctly heard Him say this would be the "year of the quantum leap." I had, of course, heard this term before, but I didn't fully understand the meaning of it in regard to what God desires to do in and through His church. Webster's defines *quantum leap* as "a sudden and significant change or increase; something sudden, spectacular and vitally important, a sudden highly significant advance ... breakthrough." Wow! Am I ever ready for this. Aren't you?

Upon further research, I discovered that in **quantum science**, a quantum leap is described as an abrupt movement of an electron from one radiant energy level to another with no smooth transition, no in between. An electron will build up energy and become “excited,” then will suddenly jump or leap to another level to orbit another atom. As it does, the photons emit a burst of light. It goes from point A to point B with no in between. Once it makes this jump, it finds a place of stability, then begins to build energy once again to work up to the next leap to the next level. In a quantum leap moment, *bam!* Everything changes. It is a “suddenly season” filled with light, energy and power that redefines our present and our future.

### **Quantum Leap Freedom**

This is what happens when we have an encounter with **Jesus**—*bam!* Everything changes. Like the children of **Israel** coming out of Egypt after Passover, *bam!* One minute they were slaves, the next moment they were declared free.

The number 14 is tied to the concept of Passover since it is celebrated on the 14th day of the first Hebraic month. So when we encounter Jesus our Passover Lamb, *bam!* A lifetime of slavery, bondage, addiction, fear and sin is destroyed in a moment. We make a quantum leap out of the kingdom of darkness in to the kingdom of God’s Son, the kingdom of light. This will be a year of quantum leap freedom as God’s people experience and appropriate the power of the cross on a whole new level.

One moment you may be sick; then you are suddenly healed. One moment you may be bound by darkness and oppression; then the light of **God’s love** makes you free, full of joy, full of light. One moment you are poor with nothing working for you, then *bam!* God turns things around, releasing His divine favor and opening new doors of opportunity and blessing.

This is a year for God's people to build up excitement and energy through releasing our faith, dreaming bigger dreams, and praying in the Holy Spirit—leaping from glory to glory, from faith to faith, and from strength to strength. This will be a time of exponential increase for the body of Christ.

## **The Quantum Kingdom**

In quantum mechanics, scientists have found that there are two realms of reality. One is called the present, which is the life we are living. The second realm is considered to be the realm where anything is possible. It is described as a reality in which there is infinite possibility and unlimited potential. As scientists have studied this quantum realm, they have widely concluded that this earth we live in, and all of humanity, could not just have occurred by chance but rather that there has to have been a Designer or a Creator. They have been amazed to find that at the quantum level, each atom contains a signature, as though this **Creator** wrote, "I made this."

I believe this indicates that scientists are seeing into the reality of the realm Jesus called the kingdom of God. Everything He did demonstrated this quantum realm of the kingdom of **God**. Each time He healed someone of sickness or disease, He was demonstrating this realm of infinite possibility. When He walked on water, He was demonstrating that this present realm of existence is subjugated to this other supernatural realm. When He was transfigured, He was manifesting the unseen realm of quantum kingdom glory in the midst of the earth realm. Everything He did demonstrated that the kingdom of God is actually right here among us—a supernatural realm in which anything is possible.

In Acts 8, we see that Philip experienced this quantum realm and made a quantum leap. One minute he was baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch, and the next moment—*bam!* He was translated from one location to another, from the middle of a desert to

suddenly the middle of the city of Azotus. He entered the quantum realm of infinite possibility and demonstrated the limitless power of the kingdom of God.

### **Quantum-Leap Power**

Similarly, the disciples experienced a quantum leap of power and anointing on the Day of Pentecost. After 10 days of seeking the Lord after Jesus ascended to heaven suddenly—*bam!* The room they were in was filled with a sound of a rushing mighty wind, and they were all baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire. They were given power from on high to go out and work miracles, cast out demons and preach the gospel of the kingdom with boldness. In one instant, they were transformed.

This is similar to but much more powerful than what occurred when Elisha received the double-portion mantle from Elijah. Prior to that time, Elisha had never done one miracle ... then *bam!* From that moment forward, he demonstrated God's transforming power everywhere he went. He experienced a quantum leap of the anointing and power of God.

In this season, God's people must cry out as Elisha did: "Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me" (2 Kings 2:9). In response, God is giving His people a new mantle for a new day. It is a double-portion mantle, as 14 is a double-portion number. But we must realize what we have received is far more powerful than the mantle Elijah passed to Elisha.

We are stepping in to a time of favor from heaven where signs, wonders and miracles will become widespread, not only within the church but in the marketplace as well, as believers begin to awaken and arise to the transforming power of God that is within them.

I had a dream early this year in which I pulled up to a place that does oil changes on vehicles. There was a sign in the window that said, "Change your oil. It will change your

life!" I believe this is what the Lord is saying to His church. We need an oil change. Psalm 92:10 says, "I have been anointed with fresh oil." There is a fresh-oil anointing for those who are pressing into His presence and His promises this year.

### **Quantum-Leap Awakening**

God has set us up for a quantum leap season of the move of God's Spirit into a time of great awakening. Revivals here and there will no longer suffice. We need an awakening. I believe an awakening is epidemic revival. The word *epidemic* means "affecting many people at the same time, spreading from person to person in a location where something is not prevalent, a rapid spread or increase in something making it widespread." We need epidemic revival in America today.

Remember, in a quantum leap, the electrons build up energy and become jittery or excited. Scientists really refer to it this way. God is releasing supernatural miracles and favor to His people so we can become excited again. There is a momentum that is building in the Spirit. We need to set our hearts to take all the limits off of God this year.

I heard the Lord say that we have entered in to a three-year period where He is going to make Himself real in spectacular ways. The purpose of this is so that He can restore hope to the **church** so the church can then restore hope to the world. Romans 15:13 empowers us with these words: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." We will encounter the God of hope in a new and powerful way in this new season.

### **Quantum-Leap Provision**

At the beginning of this year, my mother-in-law, Evelyn "Mom" Hamon, had a spiritual dream that demonstrates quantum-leap provision. In this dream, she saw Bishop Bill Hamon and some

of our ministry leaders ministering to a large field of people. After a while the people were getting hungry. Just as in the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000, they searched around and came up with just a few loaves of bread, hardly enough to meet the overwhelming need.

Still, Hamon ripped off a piece of bread and handed it to one of the people. As he gave it, suddenly his loaf of bread was whole again. When that person took the bread in his hand, he immediately broke off a piece and put it in a basket for Hamon, then turned and gave a piece to someone else. When he did that, his small piece turned into a whole loaf.

As each one kept breaking bread, they would first put a piece in a basket for Hamon, then share a piece with others, and their piece was made whole each time. At the end, he had the original few loaves of bread even though he had fed a multitude. But besides, there were baskets full of provision that came back to him. Every one present ate and was full and had an abundance left over afterward for themselves.

This is quantum bread. As we give and share what God has given us, we will see a miraculous demonstration of multiplied provision. Our little suddenly becomes much. God shifts us from scarcity to abundance in one giant leap.

As we sow financial seeds, we should expect a quantum-leap release into our own finances. Already we are hearing of financial miracles where debt has been suddenly cancelled, properties have sold, new contracts are being signed. Expansion, blessing and prosperity are breaking out in the lives of many.

This is a time for the manifestation of the prophet's reward. The Shunammite woman, in 2 Kings 4, made a place in her home for the prophet of the double portion, Elisha. He represented the voice of God to her life, her city and her land. As she made a place for the voice of God in her home,

that became a place of miracles for her. Because of her generous heart and her desire to receive the voice of God, she received the prophet's reward, which was the miracle she needed that money could not buy.

After years of barrenness, *bam!* She had a child. Years later, she needed another miracle as that child of promise dropped dead suddenly. She took the child and placed him on the bed in the room she made for the prophet, the voice of God. When Elisha came in, he confronted the spirit of death on the child, and *bam!* The child experienced a quantum leap, out of death into life. Again, in 2 Kings 8, after having lost her land and house when she obeyed the prophet and fled for seven years as famine came upon the land, the Shunammite experienced another *bam!* quantum leap encounter when instantly all that she lost was immediately restored.

### **Quantum-Leap Harvest**

To further demonstrate the concept of quantum leaps that take place in a "suddenly season," allow me to relate the story of Chinese bamboo. It is a costly, precious wood grown in places in China. The first year, the farmer plows his field and prepares the ground for the bamboo seed. He then carefully digs small holes for each seed and plants the crop. He waters it, fertilizes it and weeds it, carefully watching over the ground in which his crop is growing. But at the end of the first year, when he surveys the progress of growth, he sees nothing—no sign of life, no tender shoot, nothing.

In the second year, he waters, weeds, fertilizes and tends his field, but again, at the end of that year, nothing. By the end of the third growing season, a small shoot pushes its way above the soil. It only achieves about three inches of growth; after three years, that averages one inch per year. Not exactly impressive. By the end of the fourth year of growth, the plant measures a little over a foot tall.

But in the fifth year of growth, the bamboo shoot hits a growing season that lasts four months. During those four months, the bamboo that the farmer has lovingly tended for five years suddenly shoots 90 to 100 feet tall. There are days in which the bamboo actually grows three to four feet in a single day. Suddenly.

I think we have all come to realize that God's "suddenlies" don't always happen suddenly. But we are now in a quantum leap "suddenly season," where we will see those things we have prayed over, decreed to, quoted Scriptures for, prophesied into and warred a good warfare for suddenly come to pass.

This is a *now* season. We cannot be discouraged or disappointed by the previous years as we have looked out over our planted field of promise and seen no visible results of our labor. Because suddenly, *bam!* Rapid growth, fulfillment and harvest are at hand. It is time to experience the quantum power of the kingdom of God. Miracles, signs and wonders are our portion as we take off the limits and arise to our potential in Christ Jesus. Quantum glory is at hand.

**Tom and Jane Hamon** are the senior pastors of Vision Church at Christian International in Santa Rosa Beach, Fla. Their ministry together is an example to the body of Christ of a husband-and-wife team working in tandem and unity to accomplish God's purposes. Their ministry is characterized by a rich deposit of God's wisdom to provide apostolic covering for the church, prophetic teaching and ministry, and demonstration of kingdom anointing and power. They travel as an apostolic/prophetic team to the nations, imparting both the spirit of wisdom and revelation to establish the church and break open territories through spiritual warfare for the kingdom of God to be experienced in a powerful and practical way

**Jane Hamon** has been featured on Christian television on TBN and through co-hosting with Gordon Robertson on the 700 Club.

*She has also written several books, including her very practical work on dreams and visions, her call to marketplace ministers, called The Cyrus Decree, and her proclamation over women in the church to arise and be the Deborah Company.*

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## **Shake Us to Wake Us**

“At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, ‘Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.’ The words ‘once more’ indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain” (Heb. 12:26-27 NIV).

God will shake everything that can be shaken in your life until all that remains is of Him. Much like a strong wind blows the dead leaves from a tree, God will blow away all the unnecessary distractions that have nested in the branches of your life.

God often pulls us out of our comfort zones so that we can grow deeper in Him. Sometimes we go through a cold winter so that our roots will go down deep to our Source; other times we enjoy a spring season of abundant rain. No matter what season we are in, God is there with us.

Do not miss the purpose of the process. God does not shake you to torment you. He shakes you to awaken you.

If you are receiving your affirmation, love, self-worth, joy, strength or acceptance from any source but God, He will shake it. He does not do this to cause you pain; rather, He wants to pull you closer to Him.

Make sure you don't try to rebuild what God has shaken in your

life. He wants to rebuild everything in you so that your only life source is in Him.

What is God trying to shake in your life? It's time you submit to God's truth so that you may experience His true freedom. Though God is shaking you, He is giving you an unshakeable kingdom.

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our 'God is a consuming fire'" (Heb. 12:28-29).

*Adapted from Out of Control and Loving it! (Charisma House, 2006).*