

# Transitions

## Stepping Down

**Francis Chan**, as pastor of Cornerstone Community Church. He plans to pursue a new form of ministry, which at press time was still unnamed. He was to continue preaching at Cornerstone through May.

## Appointed

**Rev. Niek Tramper**, as general secretary of the European Evangelical Alliance, the European branch of the World Evangelical Alliance. He succeeds Gordon Showell-Rogers effective in September.

## Honored

**Don Finto**, former pastor of Belmont Church in Nashville, Tenn., for 60 years in ministry. Michael W. Smith, Marty Goetz and other longtime associates attended the April 22 tribute service.

## Resigned

**Blaine Bartel**, as pastor of Northstar Church in suburban Dallas after acknowledging an affair. Bartel said he plans to find a job outside the church and focus on repairing his 28-year marriage.

---

**Holy Spirit Awakening**

# Generations Through 24/7 Prayer

*Youth are spreading renewal to colleges in the Northeast*



A student “awakening” that began last fall at the International House of Prayer (IHOP) shows no signs of stopping as it heads into its seventh month.

The nightly revival services began Nov. 11 when a prayer meeting broke out in an IHOP Bible college class led by the school’s provost. The gathering lasted for 15 hours, and since then people from around the world have flocked to IHOP’s headquarters in Kansas City, Mo., to attend the services.

Participants, including 30,000 online viewers from 188 nations, share testimonies of physical and emotional healing, as well as a deeper awareness of God’s love.

“I feel like we’re on ground we’ve never been before,” said Wesley Hall, provost of IHOP’s Forerunner School of Ministry. “We’re seeing people crying, convicted and laughing, [as they experience] creative miracles and emotional healings.”

Bailey Gaul, 21, attended the Nov. 11 service and was skeptical at first. “I was ... offended at what was going on with the laughing and shaking,” Gaul said. “Wes came in manifesting the presence of God and giggling. I was offended.”

But when Gaul received prayer, she said she felt as though she was experiencing the love of God for the first time.

IHOP student Crystal Camacho also doubted that the revival was genuine at first. “I had a critical, judgmental spirit,” she said. “I closed my heart to what was going on.”

But after a friend testified of being set free from pride and

religion, Camacho decided to give it a chance. "My eyes got healed, and I was set free [from pride]," she said. "I didn't have to wear glasses after that."

Last spring, Camacho and Gaul joined several hundred IHOP students in carrying the awakening to college campuses in the Northeast. "We held a 40-day Daniel fast and invited college students across the nation to join us in Boston," said Sarah Sun Kim, executive vice president of IHOP.Â

From March 1 to April 9, several teams of students hosted 24-hour prayer meetings followed by weekend services in Maine, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont and New Hampshire. Kim said 200 students attended an "awakening" service hosted by five evangelical college ministries. "There was massive deliverance from immorality and sexual sin," she said.

Gaul ministered to a girl at the service who had been molested by a cousin. "I walked her through deliverance, and as I prayed for her she broke out in joy," Gaul said. "She didn't like being touched but she hugged me when the service was over."

Camacho preached to more than 300 students at Harvard Square. After she preached, she met a young woman who had just been ridiculed for her stand for purity. "I was just praying this morning that God would send someone to meet me," the girl told Camacho. She attended services that evening and was filled with the Holy Spirit.


IHOP students also saw miraculous healings. "This guy was limping on a crutch across Harvard Square," said Michael Cho, 25. "Everyone on the square was staring at him because he was in so much pain. I prayed for him and then asked him how he felt. He said he felt really good and starts walking carrying his crutches. We have 50 to 100 visitors screaming, "Jesus is alive!"

IHOP founder Mike Bickle expects the student awakening services to go on indefinitely. “I had three prophetic dreams in 2008 and 2009 about revival and I knew it was going to hit us,” Bickle said. “I’m in the boardroom for a couple meetings and we started getting texts that revival was breaking out. Finally after the 38th testimony, I left the meeting and stayed for three hours in the service.”

Bickle has told *Charisma* that IHOP is one of many places God is visiting and that “many other places are soon to receive a visitation of the Holy Spirit.”

---

## **Is the Obama Administration Softening on Religious Liberty?**

A U.S. commission on religious freedom says the Obama  administration may be softening its stand on protecting religious freedom.

In its 11th annual report on global religious persecution, the bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom said since his 2009 speech in Cairo, President Barack Obama has been calling for nations to respect “freedom of worship” rather than “religious freedom.”

The change in phrasing could be viewed as a policy shift by human rights activists and officials in other nations, commission chair Leonard Leo said. The phrase “freedom of worship” allows restrictive governments to prop up a few houses of worship while denying the faithful basic human rights or permitting them to be gunned down while leaving

places of worship without bringing the perpetrators to justice, he noted.

“If the United States cares about human rights, if we value international stability, if we are concerned about countering extremism, freedom of religion or belief must be a critical component of our nation’s diplomacy, national security and economic development objectives,” Leo said. “The current administration has been insufficiently engaged in promoting the freedom of religion ... abroad.”

He said Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton also has been softening her language on religious freedom, and the commission criticized both the Bush and Clinton administrations for not prioritizing religious freedom. White House spokesman Tommy Vietor disagreed with the commission, saying President Obama “has spoken clearly and unequivocally about his support for religious freedom,” *USA Today* reported.

The commission’s report also was critical of the Obama administration for not nominating an ambassador-at-large for religious freedom.

Established in 1998, the commission monitors religious freedom and releases an annual report recommending that certain nations be named “countries of particular concern” (CPCs) and suggests penalties. This year the commission recommended 13 nations be named CPCs—Burma, China, North Korea, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

---

# Hobby Lobby Family Owns One of The Oldest Bibles in the World

Christian-owned arts and crafts store chain wants to tell an old, old story—the Bible's.

Hobby Lobby, owned by the Green family, who are longtime Pentecostals, has been buying rare Bibles to include in a proposed National Bible Museum, which would tell an interactive history of the Bible. The Oklahoma-based company has been collecting Hebrew scrolls, medieval manuscripts, biblical papyri and an assortment of Bibles and rare books, including the extremely rare *Codex Climaci Rescriptus*, a sixth-century Bible that is considered one of the earliest-known near-complete Bibles in the world.

“We feel it is important to give others the opportunity to experience biblical history without traveling around the world, and the museum will bring this history together in one location,” Hobby Lobby President Steve Green said.

The museum also would examine the persecution the Bible has endured, he added. Tentative plans call for a 300,000-square-foot facility to be located in a major metropolitan area, possibly in Dallas.

---

## Angelic Bodyguards

*Psalm 91, which speaks of God's divine protection, takes on new meaning when angels come to the rescue. Such was the*

*case for Mike Disanza of the New York City Police Department, whose angelic encounter is highlighted in Peggy Joyce Ruth's latest book, Psalm 91:*

Over my system came the message: 72nd Street and Broadway, Manhattan! I knew the meaning of the code: Cop in trouble and needs assistance. I rushed to the subway and there was a crowd of people around the cop who refused to let him get his prisoner. I walked directly over and cuffed the prisoner, which made the crowd go wild.

One man shouted: "Here comes the train! Let's throw the cop in the subway!" The crowd converted into a mob. I felt myself moving toward the subway track, being pushed by this angry crowd who was intending to hurl me onto the tracks in front of the speeding train. I could hear the sound and see the lights of the oncoming train in the tunnel.

Being a new Christian, I cried out the best prayer I knew: "Jesus help!" Suddenly, these two big guys in the crowd started pushing the mob out of our way. They parted the crowd, got over to me and said, "Follow us!" I grabbed the prisoner and followed them as they made a path for us—and felt the other cop right on my heels hanging onto my jacket. The two men ushered us back to the patrol car and I loaded the prisoner in the back seat. He was still screaming his mouth off about how he hated cops. I turned around to thank the two strangers, but was surprised that neither of them was there. *Oh, well*, I thought, and muttered my thanks to them anyway.

I jumped in and the other cop got in next to the driver. He thanked me gratefully for my help. I deflected the compliment and said, "Thank God for those two big guys pushing the crowd apart, telling us to follow them and moving us to the car!"

"I didn't hear nothing. I didn't see nothing," he said. "And I

never heard anyone tell us to follow them.”


Puzzled, I asked, “Eddie, how could you not see the men? You were right behind us!”

When I turned around, I suddenly saw a 3-D message through the glass: *Angels are ministering spirits to help those who will believe.* It was at that moment I realized what had happened and said to myself, *My gosh, those guys were angels!*

God really does give His angels charge concerning us (see Ps. 91:11).

---

## Life After Death Row

In 1974, Army veteran William Moore returned to his Georgia  home to find that his estranged wife had become a drug addict. Her addiction left him with little money to provide for their 4-year-old son, and in an act of desperation, Moore attempted to burglarize the home of an elderly man. But the robbery turned violent, and Moore murdered the 77-year-old.

The former soldier pled guilty to robbery and murder charges and was given the death penalty. Through the next 16 years in prison he accepted Christ and began praying with other inmates and preaching the gospel to them. He also taught inmates to read and write and assisted them in appealing their sentences. “I’d do anything to help anyone so long as I was not focusing on me,” he said.

While in prison Moore received 15 stays of execution, and his death sentence eventually was reduced to life. In 1991, he was paroled. Moore is now the only self-confessed death-row inmate in Georgia to be released. The victim’s family members, who

are Christians, all spoke to the appeals board on Moore's behalf.

Moore says his freedom is a testament to God's grace. "The only thing that I can say is Jesus Christ, that's the answer," Moore told *Charisma*. "Beyond that, Billy Moore isn't a special person. It's just God's grace."

Moore is now an ordained minister with the Pentecostal Assemblies of God denomination and travels the country sharing his testimony and preaching the gospel.

---

## **With This Ring...I Give to the poor**

Would you donate your wedding ring to a worthy cause if you  knew it meant a child living in Africa would have clean drinking water for years to come? That's the purpose behind With This Ring (WTR), a ministry dedicated to building wells in Third World countries. "We take to heart the command of Jesus when He says that we should sell our possessions and give the money to the poor," says Ali Eastburn, executive director of WTR. "We believe that if we can learn to give radically, we can literally change the world for Jesus." To donate your ring, first have it appraised for cut, style and estimated worth. If the cost of the appraisal is more than the ring, WTR recommends that you sell it and donate the proceeds to the ministry. If the ring is worth more than \$500, go to [withthisring.org](http://withthisring.org) and follow the steps to donate your jewelry.

---

# Using the Unusual

Amena Brown doesn't always close her eyes and sway to music while in praise and worship at church. Sometimes she stands in front of the congregation and performs worshipful, hard-hitting "spoken-word poetry" to music. Brown, who also ministers her thought-provoking poetry to young adults at Fusion and Passion conferences across the country, says that everyone should let God use whatever gifts they have—not just the "popular" gifts usually used in church. "I'm always really big on encouraging young people to do what's in your heart," Brown told *Charisma*. "Do what you're passionate about. You're never too young or too old to start doing the passion that God put in your heart."

## **An Inconvenient Savior**

*Jesus is no convenient savior*

*He is agitation to the prideful religious*

*He is the truth in love to the*

*Heart of a sinner*

*He did not call us to finding cotton-like*

*comfort in Christianity*

*He called us to live honestly,*

*turn over tables for justice,  
love the unloved and unloving  
In Jesus there is no comfort zone,*

*no playing it safe  
There is feeling the tremble of fear and*

*letting it propel you to do His will  
Holding His hand in the dark and letting  
Him lead you where you can't see*

**-Amena Brown**

---

## **Laughter in the Dark**

*Christian funnyman Michael Jr. has performed on The Tonight Show With Jay Leno, Jimmy Kimmel Live! and the Comedy Central network. But instead of settling for smiles from TV audiences, he took his jokes to unlikely venues—prisons, homeless shelters and safehouses for the abused and HIV patients. Charisma spoke with him about his comedy tour to these depressing places that's chronicled in his upcoming film, *Comedy: The Road Less Traveled*, set to release in September.*

**Charisma:** *Why did you decide to leave the normal setting for a comedy show and take your routine to people in desperate situations?*

**Michael Jr.:** About a year and a half ago I was headlining in a club in Los Angeles in a well-to-do area. Most of the time when a comedian gets on stage he wants to get laughter. That night God said, "Don't go out there to get laughter from people, go out there and give them an opportunity to laugh." [That statement] changed everything I did. After the show I walked outside and there were a lot of people around me wanting my autograph and smiling. I looked across the street and saw a homeless guy with the exact opposite look on his face than those around me. After I saw this guy, I asked myself, *How can I take comedy to him? What would that look like?* Then we decided do this film called *Comedy: The Road Less Traveled*, and we went on a tour.

**Charisma:** *You visited the Samaritan House in Fort Worth, Texas, which houses homeless people with HIV; The Dolphin House in Montrose, Colo., which cares for children abused by their drug-addicted parents; and youth and adult prisons. How did you incorporate their very serious, sad circumstances into your comedy shows?*

**Michael Jr.:** I have no idea how it happened. In every location I went to, it was pretty phenomenal ... but to be real with you, I was a little afraid. I would think: *Everyone in this room has HIV, they're homeless or they have some sort of other issue. And now I'm going to tell jokes. How will I be received?*

In an adult prison, I'm sitting there praying: "[God], I need a joke right up front, so I can be funny—immediately." I was going to say, "You guys are a captive audience!" But because I was afraid, I didn't do that one. But there was an old white guy right up front [in the audience] named Moses. He had a white beard, so I looked at him and said, "Moses, when I read

about you in the Bible you were doing better than this. What happened?”

I said, “Moses, this is what I want you to do: I want you to look the prison guard directly in his eyes. I want you to say, ‘Let my people go.’” The whole room burst out laughing, and we had a fabulous time from that point on. In most locations there was something there that really allowed me to connect [with my audience].

In this film you actually get to see these transformations. In the Samaritan House a guy approached me and said, “I want you to know I haven’t laughed like this in over 20 years, since I was diagnosed with AIDS.” It was at that moment that I knew this thing was bigger than just going and telling jokes to people.

***Charisma:** That’s exciting. What kind of reaction have you seen so far from people watching the film?*

**Michael Jr.:** We’ve done a few small screenings. After people see this film they want to do something. A lady in Orlando saw the film and [told me], “On Wednesdays, I’m opening up my [dance] studio to teach homeless kids how to dance ballet.” It just blew me away. She comes up with this because of seeing this film. There are other people doing the same kind of stuff.

***Charisma:** Though you’re a Christian comedian, you’ve performed in both religious and secular venues. How has your faith affected your craft?*

**Michael Jr.:** I have an understanding that my comedy and the things that I do are way bigger than me. It’s just a gift that I have, and it’s only really a gift if I am willing to give it away—not just to those who can afford it, but more importantly to those who really need it.

The Bible says in Proverbs 17:22: “A merry heart does good

like medicine” If it’s a medicine and it does good for you, shouldn’t we give medicine to those who really need it—to those who are sick? It just makes sense to me.


---

## Your Turn

*How can you use your gifts for good? It’s not as hard as you may think. Here are a few easy ideas.*

1. If you are a seamstress, why not use your abilities to provide clothes for the less fortunate? You could even offer to teach classes at women’s shelters in your area.
  2. Can you read? Why not volunteer at an orphanage or nursing home. Taking time to read to someone could mean the world to a person who feels abandoned.
  3. If you’re a great business person, look into teaching interview skills at a homeless shelter. Some people just need a little direction to get back on their feet.
- 

## Soaring Above the Downturn

While businesses across the nation are struggling to  survive the economic nose dive, charismatic entrepreneur Mark Sterns says his successful aviation business, Higher Power Aviation, is soaring because of Christ.

“The first thing we did as a company was to dedicate it to the

Lord,” says Sterns, an Oral Roberts University graduate who co-founded his company with a partner 15 years ago. “Not only did we want it to be a business, but also for it to be a ministry.”

Sterns is president of the Fort Worth, Texas, training school, which has funneled more than 2,000 pilots to Southwest Airlines and trained astronauts and actors to take flight. He says that his Christian values have helped his school gain the reputation within the aviation industry as the premier flight school.

“For many of those pilots who want to go to Southwest Airlines, they’ll talk amongst themselves and say: ‘Oh, you want to go to Southwest? Call on Higher Power. ‘ And they don’t realize what they just said.”

Sterns says that although his business operates in the private sector, demonstrating Christ has still been possible.

“What we have been able to do by just living and ministering through our business ... [is give others] permission to live lives of faith in their professions,” Sterns says.