

Michael W. Smith's Rockettown Ministry Changing Young Lives for 30 Years

Nashville is known as Music City; it's also home to one of the country's most unique inner-city ministries. Rockettown has been helping kids stay off the streets and find Jesus for three decades. And you might be surprised who started it.

Teens who are into skateboarding, video games, need a hot meal, or just a place to do homework can find it all here at Rockettown, an outreach with a mission to help young people experience the love of God. The mind behind Rockettown, now in its 30th year, is Christian music artist Michael W. Smith.

He tells CBN that, back in 1991, he literally heard God say, "Build it and they'll come. And I kept thinking, no, that's the baseball movie, that's Kevin Costner. And I just kept hearing it, 'build it and they'll come, build it and they'll come.'"

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"And so, I did a bunch of research, and we had meetings, and everybody said it would never work, and three years later we opened up Rockettown in Franklin, Tennessee," recalls the ministry founder.

CEO Kenny Alonzo says their first priority is getting kids in the door.

"If it's going to excite a kid and get 'em in the building, we're going to do it. And so, once they're here, we get to love them and care for them and provide for them. And we try to be the hands and feet of Jesus. I know that's said a lot,

but honestly, that's what we do," said Alonzo.

As for who is walking through the doors, Alonzo told us, "We are within a mile from the most violent public housing community in the state of Tennessee. And that's saying something because Memphis is pretty rough, and we have a lot of kids that come out of that community and they're here in their safe environment every single day.

"We've had everything from couch surfers who have a home, but they don't want to stay there, to kids who live in storage units with mom because they don't have anywhere to go. And then some kids from the street, and they just come in here because they can get warm when it's cold," he said.

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Ages here range from 10 to 20, with a focus on high school students like 15-year-old Lemy Sanders who enjoys skateboarding and working in the skate shop. When asked what Rocketown means to him, Lemy told us, "For me, it's just, being in a community that you do fun things for kids like me."

Nineteen-year-old skateboarder Izzy Hopkins, who's been coming here since he was about seven years old, said he likes that "it's a safe environment, a fun place, great place to meet new people."

Another cool feature of Rocketown – a recording studio for those who feel called to the music industry.

"That's a no-brainer to me. We have a lot of creative kids,

and so this gives them an outlet to go in, and with technology today, you can do some pretty extraordinary things,” Smith said.

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Heaven is Real: Colton Burpo Shares His Breathtaking Vision of Heaven

There’s no doubt about it: heaven is real.

In an interview with Billy Hallowell, Colton Burpo, whose near-death experience as a child captivated the world in the bestselling book and film “Heaven Is for Real,” revisits the miraculous events that shaped his life and faith. Two decades later, Colton’s story continues to inspire and challenge believers and skeptics alike.

As a young child, Burpo underwent emergency surgery for a ruptured appendix, which led to a near-death experience that forever altered his life. During his time in heaven, he claims to have seen angels and conversed with Jesus.

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One of the first things Burpo remembers is lifting out of his body and seeing the doctors working to save him. From above, he was able to observe his mother in one room, on the phone, praying fervently for him, and his father in another room, crying out to God in prayer. But the experience quickly shifted to something far more serene and awe-inspiring.

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Burpo describes sitting on Jesus' lap, where he felt an overwhelming sense of peace and comfort. To calm him down, angels in heaven began singing to him. This calming, divine presence was a stark contrast to the fear and confusion he had felt moments earlier.

One of the most striking aspects of Burpo's testimony was his encounter with his older sister, who he never knew existed. Before he was born, Burpo's parents had suffered a miscarriage, and the baby was lost. In heaven, Burpo met this sister, who was described as being the age he would have been had she been born. She greeted him with a bear hug at the gates of heaven, which deeply impacted his parents when he later described the encounter.

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Reflecting on his journey, Burpo shared how, during his high school years, God challenged him to not rely solely on his childhood experience of heaven. "I don't know anything different," he says, acknowledging that while his story is extraordinary, it does not make him immune to struggles. Burpo emphasizes that despite his encounter with the supernatural, he still faced temptations and the complexities of growing up in the public eye.

“It’s been a faith walk for me,” Burpo says. “I’ve been faithfully doing the last thing He’s told me to do and then He keeps adding things to the plate.”

Burpo’s testimony offers a powerful message of hope and eternal perspective. He encourages believers, especially those struggling with life’s difficulties, to trust in the goodness of God, knowing that what awaits in heaven far surpasses anything on earth.

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Abby Trivett is content development editor for Charisma Media.

The Book of Revelation Is Not the ‘Unsolvable Puzzle’ Critics Claim It to Be

The founder of Lamb & Lion Ministries, Dr. David Reagan, often has spoken about critics of Bible prophecy referring to Revelation as a “Chinese puzzle,” a mystery so intricate and challenging as to be unsolvable. Or, if it can be solved, it is only by sheer luck or a generous supply of hints.

We’ve all seen wooden and metal puzzles that follow this model. They are fun to play with for a while, but quickly grow frustrating to anyone who does not already know the trick to solving the mystery.

God’s revelation of the end times – including the timing of Jesus return and the events of the Tribulation – can appear to be an unsolvable mystery to those who are undiscerning. But

for those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ, understanding is guaranteed.

Keys to Working a Puzzle

During the enforced “social distancing” of the COVID-19 crisis in early 2020, my family passed the time several evenings by working puzzles. We worked 500, 1000, and 2000-piece puzzles, all while enjoying each other’s company. Some puzzles were more difficult than others, but all of them were solvable.

I’ve loved puzzles since I was a little boy. While working those puzzles, I reflected on the way we work puzzles. Typically, we find all the edge pieces, with special emphasis placed on finding the corners. Most people assemble the entire outer edge of the puzzle, then work on portions that have high contrast or distinguishing patterns and colors. Finally, we’ll fill in all the “tweener” areas. Every puzzle-worker knows how frustrating it can be to get to the end and discover that pieces are missing.

Biblical Application

Let me say from the outset that the Word of God is not an unknowable puzzle. God wants to communicate with us, and He knows how to do so. And you do not need a degree in hermeneutics to understand His Word. From His first revelation to His last, He communicated in a manner that can be understood. He even sent His only Son Jesus, is so that knowing Him, we might know God (John 17:3).

Having said that, there are mysteries that will only be fully understood in the fullness of time. Likewise, Jesus communicated in such a manner that only those who “hear His voice” would discern the full meaning of His teaching. Regarding His tendency to speak in parables, He said: “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of

heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; And seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive," (Matt. 13:11-14).

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Jesus went on to tell His disciples that they were blessed because their eyes could see and their ears could hear – not merely the physical sights and sounds, but the meaning of all He was revealing. He said, "truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it," (Matt. 13:16-17).

We know too that although anyone can open the Bible and read its text, only a Christian indwelt by the Holy Spirit can understand its deep spiritual truths. In fact, even before becoming a Christian, a person can understand the Gospel only through the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

Satan knew the writings of the Old Testament prophets, but still did not discern the manner of Jesus' coming, ministry, death, and resurrection. How much more limited is human understanding without enlightenment by the Holy Spirit. But when a person places their trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord the Holy Spirit blesses them with understanding.

Speaking to His disciples before His death, Jesus said (John 16:12-14): "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak

of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

Understanding the Things to Come

So when we consider end times prophecies – all those things that must soon come to pass – some mysteries remain. But, there are clear outlines that allow discernment for those who have the Holy Spirit. And, we are promised in Scripture that in the end times many previous mysteries will be made clear (Daniel 12:8-10). As a matter of fact, Paul said that even the day of the Lord should not overtake us like a thief (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6).

Using the puzzle analogy, Jesus has given us the outline – including the corner pieces – and provided enough contrast to recognize clear patterns. He does not come out and provide a narrative, any more than He did 2,000 years ago – lest even those without eyes see spiritual matters would gain understanding.

In Matthew 24, Jesus provided a clear outline of the signs of His return. He foretold false messiahs, wars and rumors of wars, natural disasters, and pestilence. He described a descent into ungodliness and declared that these things will come as birth pangs. That is to say, that they will increase in frequency and intensity until the end.

Jesus also warned of the terrible period known as the Great Tribulation which must precede His glorious return to earth. Matthew records His emphasis on watching for the fig tree to blossom – widely understood to be a prophetic reference to Israel and indicating the season of His return. Jesus concluded what we know as Matthew 24 by admonishing those who trust in Him to be on the alert (Matthew 24:33, 36, 44).



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The Book of Revelation

Turning to the book of Revelation, we are also given an outline – with “corner pieces” clearly identified to help us place all the prophecies in a frame of reference. In chapter 1, John sees Jesus Christ, who appears in the form recorded in Daniel 7:9-14. Placing His hand on John, Jesus said, “Do not be afraid, I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades,” (Rev. 1:17-18).

Jesus then provided the keys to understanding the entire book: “Therefore write the thing which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things,” (Rev. 1:19).

In Chapters 2 and 3, John records Jesus' dictated letters to seven churches – things which are. Then, in Chapter 4, John makes this transitional statement, “After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things’,” (Rev. 4:1).

Within the next 18 chapters, John faithfully recorded all he saw. With periodic interludes of reflection and reassurance, Revelation foretells “things to take place after these things.” The narrative unfolds with bold episodes that can be understood if they are interpreted according to their plain sense meaning. For instance, John records that 144,000 sons of Israel – 12,000 from every tribe – will be sealed to serve God. That prophecy is clear unless we spiritualize it to mean anything but 144,000 Jewish men.

The series of calamities known as the Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl Judgments also offer high contrast and a distinguishing

pattern to understand. As “the winepress of the fierce wrath of God” is squeezed out in consecutive waves, a few will be motivated toward repentance and turn to Him for salvation (Revelation 7; 19:15). But most will shake their fist at God and curse Him, sealing in their eternal fate of damnation (Revelation 11). Most importantly, Israel will come to the end of itself and turn to Jesus as Messiah (Revelation 1:7; Zechariah 12:10).

Puzzling Parts of the “Puzzle”

Like individual components of a complex jigsaw puzzle, these various prophetic elements fit together in the flow of the narrative. Still, like an intricate but workable puzzle, there are certain portions of the prophetic panorama that remain veiled in mystery.

For example, the book of Ezekiel makes it clear that there is going to be a Russian-led invasion of Israel in the end times, called the War of Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38 and 39). But, I do not know its precise timing – whether before or during the Tribulation.

I absolutely believe the Rapture will occur prior to the Tribulation, but I do not know how much time will elapse following the Rapture before the Tribulation will commence. That remains a mystery. I know that God will raise up the Two Witnesses who will prophesy in Jerusalem during the first half of the Tribulation, but their exact identity is not revealed.

Some scoffers point to such uncertainty and attempt to discredit the entire book of Revelation, or at least discount any effort to understand what it does reveal. But the broad strokes of Revelation are not difficult to understand. If you believe it is the true revelation of Jesus Christ—and take the time to study it—you will gain understanding.

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Invest Time and Effort

It took my family several days to complete our 2000-piece puzzle. We searched repeatedly for several specific pieces before they suddenly jumped out at us. We found that some sections were easy to assemble, while others took much more time and effort. But we enjoyed both the challenge and the sense of accomplishment when we finished.

How many of us have encountered the same experience in our study of God's Word? We can read a passage countless times, but then suddenly a truth will reveal itself and jump off the page into our heart. A passage or verse we've overlooked unexpectedly becomes the key to unlocking whole new treasures of blessing. I believe that will happen throughout our lives as we feed on Scripture and allow it to permeate our lives.

Why would we treat prophetic texts any differently? Some people avoid Revelation or any study of Bible prophecy because they are intimidated by the requirement to invest time and effort in understanding what God has revealed. They've heard that New Testament prophecy often references Old Testament passages, meaning that much reading and cross-referencing is required. But the same could be said of any aspect of Bible study: only those who dive into the meat of God's Word receive the blessing of growing discernment.

Speaking of those who prefer milk to meat, the writer of Hebrews said: "For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil," (Heb. 5:13-14).

Regarding the necessity of reading and studying, I am reminded

of the groans of some of the young high school students I've taught. When assigned a book to read, some chafe at the exercise altogether. The idea of investing time reading strikes them as burdensome and inhumane. Others eventually discover the joy of reading and gain new insights and perspectives.

Read and Heed

Revelation is the only book of Scripture that contains a specific blessing for anyone who "reads and heeds the words of the prophecy of this book," (Rev. 1:3; 22:7). With that promise in mind, if you believe it is the true revelation of Jesus Christ, you will be given understanding.

More than anything, all you need is the belief that God's revealed Word is true and a willingness to "read and heed" it. If you have that, the pieces of the puzzle will fall into place as the Holy Spirit guides you into all God's truth and discloses it to you.

As we await the Rapture, one of the greatest blessings you will receive is a hopeful expectation to be caught up to be with Jesus Christ – and then an eager anticipation of His return in glory. Spurred toward urgent evangelism and holy living, you'll be crying out, "Maranatha! Godspeed! Come quickly, Lord Jesus!"

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How Taking Communion Can Break the Enemy's Hold Over Your Life

In a powerful discussion on SkyWatchTV, Joe Horn and Alan DiDio delve into the topic of the rapture, exploring its significance for believers today. Together, they address misconceptions about the rapture and provide key insights into how the rapture is not just a future event but a daily call to live with purpose, urgency and anticipation of Christ's glorious return.

The Rapture Does Not Promote Complacency

At its core, the rapture represents a transformative event in which believers are caught up to meet Jesus Christ in the air. This moment signifies the redemption of God's people, where Christians receive their glorified bodies. This is not just an escape from the world's troubles but a divine moment of completion. The rapture signals the end of pain, sickness and death, as believers are made perfect in the presence of God.

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A common misunderstanding about this event is that pre-tribulation theory leads to spiritual complacency, resulting in believers disengaging from their responsibilities on Earth. However, DiDio believes that this is a genuine misunderstanding of what is to come.

"True rapture teaching causes you to engage in society," DiDio says. "It's like a two-minute warning that it's time to pick up the pace and occupy until Jesus comes."

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The understanding of the rapture calls for urgency and active engagement in the world. It's not about waiting idly for the return of Christ but living in a way that reflects His imminent return. Christians are urged to remain active in their faith, working for the kingdom while keeping an eye on the promise of Christ's return.

Living with Urgency

Rather than fostering a passive faith, the doctrine of the rapture should encourage believers to live with a sense of purpose and swiftness. This sense of urgency isn't about fear, but about eagerly preparing for the return of Jesus while being diligent in fulfilling the call to spread the message of salvation. It's a complete misunderstanding and misuse of our lives as Christians if we do not see these end times as our chance to go and preach the Gospel to all creation.



To order Joe Horn's new book, Innocence Shattered, visit .

"We need to get people to fall in love with His appearing," DiDio says. "I want this generation to fall in love with His appearing."

A Life Transformed by the Hope of His Return

Living with the expectation of the rapture doesn't just affect how we wait; it influences how we live. The hope of Christ's return should purify believers, encouraging them to live righteous lives. It's a hope that inspires a deeper love for His appearing, motivating believers to engage in kingdom work while eagerly anticipating the moment when they will be united

with Christ forever.

The rapture isn't merely an event to wait for—it's a call to live with purpose, urgency and readiness, making the most of each moment while eagerly anticipating the glorious return of our Savior.

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Abby Trivett is content development editor for Charisma Media.

'Dave Is Cancer-Free!': Candace Cameron Bure Goes Viral With Powerful Announcement About 'Full House' Co-Star's Health Battle

"Dave is cancer-free!"

That's the exuberant message actress Candace Cameron Bure shared on social media this week, months after "Full House" co-star Dave Coulier revealed a stage 3 non-Hodgkin lymphoma diagnosis.

"Join me in celebrating this AMAZING news," Bure wrote. "Let's shower him with all the love in the world!"

A representative for Coulier, 65, confirmed to People magazine

the actor is now cancer-free.

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Coulier also told Parade magazine before the announcement he is no longer sick that he had recently undergone a biopsy of a lymph node in his neck.

“[My wife] Melissa and I waited for a week to get the biopsy results back, and there is no sign of cancer,” he told the outlet, noting, at the time, he was still waiting on other results. “One of the few times in my life when ‘zero’ has been a great number to hear.”

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As CBN News previously noted, Coulier, known for portraying beloved character Joey Gladstone (. “Uncle Joey”), learned of the diagnosis in October after struggling with an upper respiratory infection.

The comedian, who reprised his role in “Fuller House,” airing on Netflix from 2016-2020, told People how he found out about the shocking diagnosis.

Swelling of lymph nodes sparked concern and doctors ordered PET and CT scans, which revealed the cancer. Coulier said he has the rare B cell lymphoma type – a “very aggressive” form.

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“I went from, ‘I got a little bit of a head cold’ to ‘I have cancer,’ and it was pretty overwhelming,” he told People at the time. “This has been a really fast roller coaster ride of a journey.”

Coulier also spoke candidly with People about how he reacted

to finding out – and why he’s remarkably calm.

To read the full story, please visit our content partners at Faithwire.

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His Son was Stabbed to Death—What This Father Did Next Will Leave You Speechless!

The father of a 17-year-old high school student who was stabbed to death during an argument over a seat at a track meet says he is choosing to forgive his son’s attacker.

Jeff Metcalf of Frisco, Texas, is the single father of twin boys, Hunter and Austin.

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Austin Metcalf reportedly got into a confrontation with 17-year-old Karmelo Anthony at Kuykendall Stadium, according to local authorities.

Jeff Metcalf told NBC5 his son was stabbed in the heart by the other student after telling him he was in the wrong seat on

the bus.

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The dad paid further tribute to his son writing on Facebook, "This tragedy has shaken me, family and friends to the core. I trust God will bring us through the tuff times ahead. I appreciate everyone who has reached out. He passed away in his brother's arms. He wasn't alone at least. I can't describe the range of emotions I am feeling. I pray God will guide our paths moving forward."

The grieving father says he is choosing to forgive while putting his faith in God to get through this.

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"I have already forgiven . God takes care of things. God takes care of me. God's going to take care of my family," he told the outlet. "That's for my his."

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You Won't Believe How Today's Society Lines Up with End- Times Prophecy