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MARCH 2021

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Dr. Tim Clinton

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Professional counselor calls men to embrace
God-defined masculinity

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in the Himalayas
ON THE RANCH FOR
GWBOW CHURCH
into the ALASKA
City with STREET TO OFFER SHELTER
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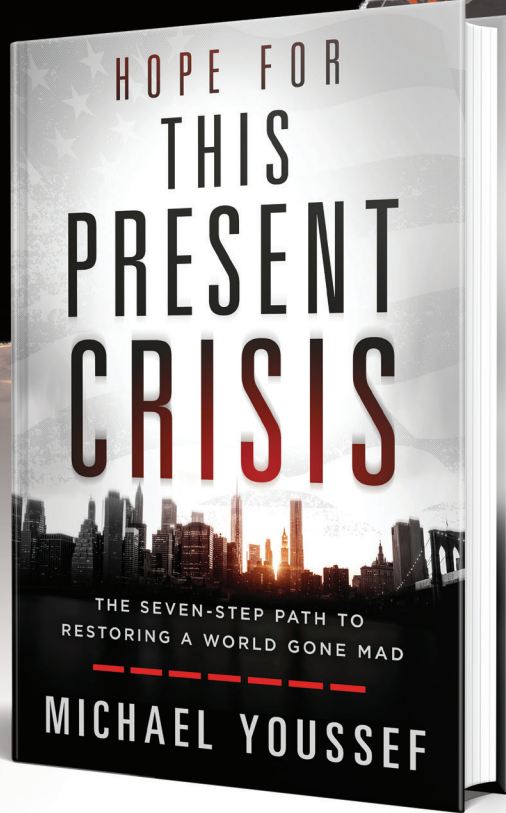
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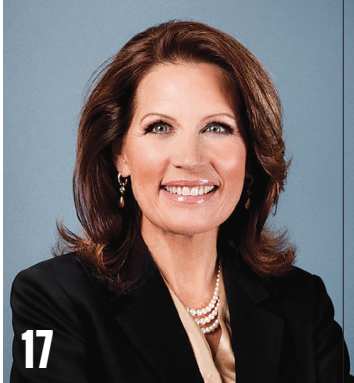


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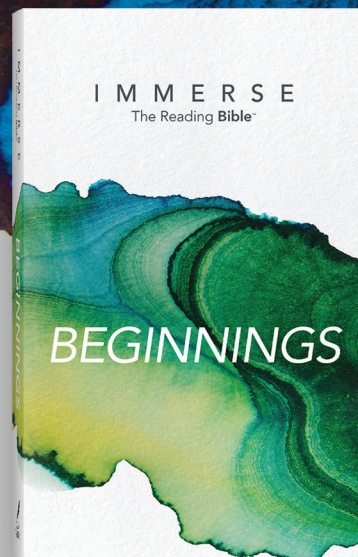
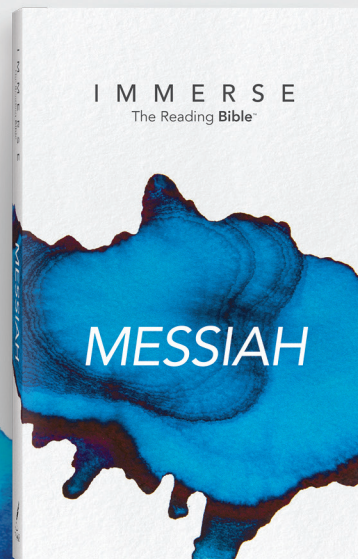
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JESUS' BIRTH BRINGS JOY

Regarding "The Last Christmas" by Gary Curtis (*Charisma*, December 2020):

"Amazing picture! I joyously celebrate Christmas, not for any pagan worship in my heart, but because without His birth, we would only have death. His life brought Life for believers. I rejoice with many others during this time together, celebrating Him! If it is my last, it only means I am then with Him. Amen."

Margi Haidle

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SUCCESS THROUGH HOLY SPIRIT

Regarding "The Global Church" by Christine D. Johnson:

"Something that stood out to me in this article was the comparison to the seven churches in Revelation. Globally, depending on where you are, there are challenges to overcome that have been faced before, and history repeats itself. Part of the breakthrough these people are having is that these leaders can discern what those things are and tackle them head on, which is why they

have seen success, through the Holy Spirit, of course."

Christina Vera, Miami

YOU HIT THE NAIL ON THE HEAD

Regarding "The Church in an Angry World" by Dr. Mark Rutland:

"Dr. Rutland hit the nail on the head with what anger is, and he offered excellent examples. Really had me examining my own life. Two quotes stuck with me the most, the first being 'Anger is an emotion not an action.' Second, 'Vertical anger at God becomes horizontal.'"

Anna B., Berwick, Louisiana

OUR WORDS HAVE POWER

Regarding "Words of Life" by Tim Cameron:

"This was a great article and something that couples need to hear. We forget, in our daily lives with our spouses, in all of the chaos of jobs, kids and responsibilities, that our words have power, that those words can destroy or lift up our marriages. Good word and great Scriptures."

Julia Diaz, Fairfield, Montana

"Dr. Rutland hit the nail on the head with what anger is, and he offered excellent examples."

—Anna B.

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Lead Us Not Into Gossip

Why we must depend on the Spirit's power to tame our tongues

The first step to understanding why we do what we don't want to do begins with probing the root cause of the behavior.

Most of us exercise regular opportunities to repent from spreading a story we heard about a friend, neighbor or colleague. As we toss and turn in bed, trying to understand why our tongue betrayed us, answers evade us, and we pray for strength to do better tomorrow.

Mark Travers reported in *Psychology Today* that the average person gossips 52 minutes per day. He cited research that concludes "sanctions against gossip may be futile and underscore the importance of understanding gossip at a descriptive level."

Researchers define three categories of gossip:

- » Positive: flattery oriented.
- » Neutral: neutral observations about others.
- » Negative: malicious commentary.

The researchers concluded that 75% of all gossip fits the category of nonevaluative or neutral.

In a recent episode of the *Greenelines* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network with author Susannah B. Lewis, she and I discussed many topics from her book *How May I Offend You Today?* Lewis offers "rants and revelations from a not-so-proper Southern lady" and opines with great clarity about "nipping gossip in the bud."

Lewis says, "Nipping the gossip bud is so hard to do, especially in these small Southern towns. I've been caught up in some of the juiciest gossip while sitting on the bleachers at a ballfield. Then, I always ask myself, 'What? What just happened?'"

The answer to Lewis' question always comes from the Holy Spirit. Psychologists do their best to describe and categorize, but the Spirit of God brings conviction.

"I will tell you that I have conviction every time I run my mouth," Lewis says. "I thank God for His conviction—for that nudge to repent. Without that, I would be a mess. We all hear so many things, and we have this desire to run and tell everyone what we know.

"I say to the Lord, 'I can't spread this; it must stop with me,'" she adds. "I want to be more conscious of the words I share. I know we crave that juicy talk and love the excitement to share goodies with others. I don't want to be a person who causes more harm than good."

If we are to squelch the gossip monster, we must walk in the Spirit and "let no corrupt communication proceed out of [our] mouth" (Eph. 4:29a, KJV). The New Living Bible



"No matter how we describe it, gossip has the power to hurt us all!"

translates this biblical phrase as "Don't use foul or abusive language," while The Message paraphrase says bluntly, "Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth."

No matter how we describe it, gossip has the power to hurt us all. Careers have been broken, relationships destroyed and churches split through the power of misplaced words.

We shudder at the regular news stories that highlight pastors and other Christian leaders who have made an error—often multiple errors—in judgment. As a result, they lose their employment.

But we don't wait for the leader's repentance and potential restoration. Instead, we eagerly spread the ugly rumors. We delight in discussing another's sin but don't dare stop to consider our own. As the Spirit intervenes, Jesus' words about logs and specks come to mind (see Matt. 7:5).

As the gossip virus spreads, it multiplies and morphs, escalating far above the original story. In the New Testament, James offers specific advice for dealing with gossip in relationships: "Do not speak evil of one another, brothers. He who speaks evil of his brother and judges his brother speaks evil of the law and judges the law. If you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge" (James 4:11, MEV).

When God's still, small voice urges us to stop a rumor before it starts, we must pray in the Spirit, asking God to help us "walk by the Spirit and [we] will not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16b, NIV).

The only effective gossip inoculation comes from the Holy Spirit.

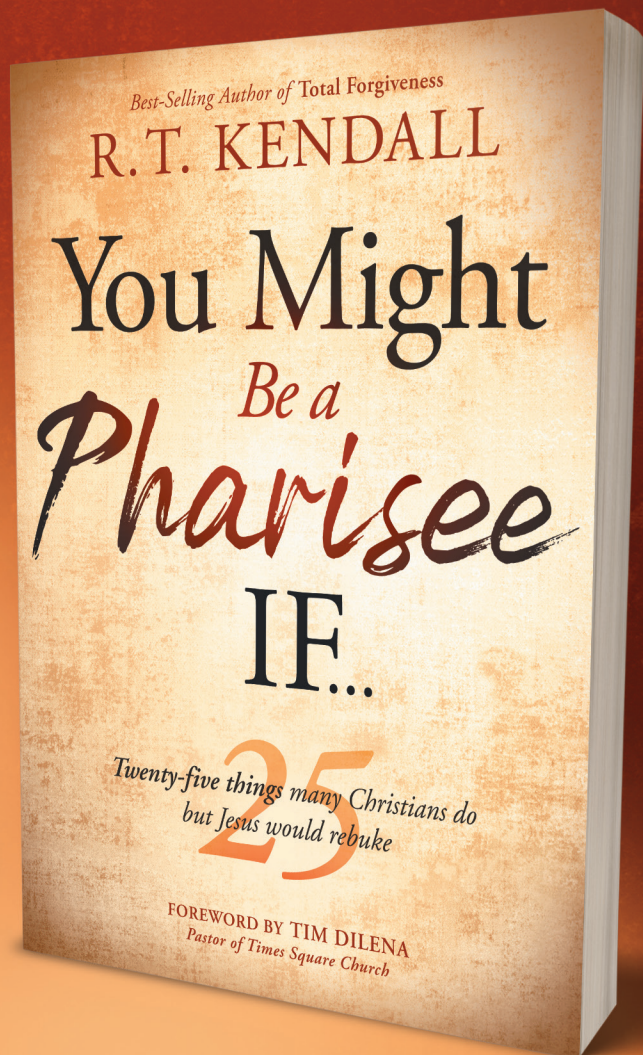
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Need a Word From God? Seek It the Right Way

I'm grateful for the gift of prophecy. But we must learn to use this gift in a healthy way.

I often meet people who tell me they need a word from God. I've seen Christians line up in front of prophets, hoping for a quick solution to their problems. I've also seen those same Christians stand in line a second time in front of the same prophets because they didn't like the word they received the first time! I call these people "prophecy chasers."

God wants to speak to His people, and I believe He has a fresh word for all of us at the right time. But there is a right way and a wrong way to seek God for prophetic direction. I'm concerned that we charismatics are guilty of abusing the gift of prophecy. Here are some guidelines that will help you:

1) Read God's Word regularly. Many Christians crave a "direct" word from God, yet they refuse to study the Bible. They may even consider reading Scripture religious or boring—yet they love the thrill of getting a prophetic word in a public meeting. Carnal Christians aren't willing to be disciplined students; they want prophetic words handed to them on a silver platter. You will never become a mature Christian if you don't learn to hear from God on your own through His Word. And if you don't read Scripture, you won't know the difference between a true prophecy and a fake one—because prophecy never contradicts the Bible.

2) Look to God for direction, not people. I seek God daily for direction. I don't chase prophets to tell me what to do or to show me my spiritual purpose. God can certainly use a prophet to speak to me—prophets are gifts to the church—but my focus is on God, not on the men or women He uses. If you ever start looking to a human being as your source of divine guidance, you are heading toward idolatry.

People who have the gift of prophecy must be careful they don't allow people to put them on pedestals. We are not mediums who read people's fortunes, and prophets should never allow themselves to be put in such a position.

3) Stop looking for the sensational. The apostle Paul said true prophecy is about three things: encouragement, comfort and exhortation (see 1 Cor. 14:3). True prophecy strengthens us, confirms God's promises and propels us into our divine destiny.

We've all heard of charismatic prophets who provide phone numbers or addresses in their prophetic words to confirm a message from God. It's true that God has the power to reveal such personal information, but in some such cases, the "prophets" were actually con artists who preyed on the gullible. Beware of prophets who use theatrics to bring a word to you. In all my years of ministry, the most solid prophets were humble men and women who never drew attention to themselves.



"Prophecy is never sent to boost your ego."

4) Don't hurry when seeking prophetic guidance. I've talked with Christians who were desperate for a word from God, but they informed me they were on a deadline. Sometimes they even seemed to be threatening God—as in, "If I don't hear from God by tomorrow, I quit!"

God moves according to His calendar, not yours. Don't throw a tantrum; mature disciples must learn to wait for God's word. Waiting will require you to adjust your timetable to God's. Don't let impatience derail you.

Sometimes God deliberately pushes the mute button. If His voice is not clear right now, it may be because He is leading you into a quiet wilderness season. You must learn to trust Him even when He's quiet. Wait on the Lord, and let your roots grow deep.

5) Make sure your heart is willing to obey. Many people are eager to hear a word from God, especially if it tells them they will have a worldwide ministry or become independently wealthy. But prophecy is never sent to boost your ego. A true word from God cuts deep to the core; it requires surrender and demands holiness.

Henry Blackaby once wrote: "Our difficulty is not that we don't know God's will. Our discomfort comes from the fact that we do know His will, but we do not want to do it." It is pointless to ask for God's prophetic word if we are not fully yielded. Before you seek a word from God, lift your hands with an attitude of unconditional surrender and be willing to obey what He says.

J. LEE GRADY was editor of *Charisma* for 11 years and now serves as contributing editor. He directs *The Mordecai Project* (themordecainproject.org), an international ministry that protects women and girls from gender-based violence. His latest book is *Set My Heart on Fire* (Charisma House).



SIMPLY CHRIST

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

CRIMINALIZING HUMANITY

When I was a young Christian, one of the most quoted Bible passages was *"There is none righteous, no, not one."* Romans 3:10. People heard in these words what they wanted to hear and ignored the Apostle Paul's explanation that this was what the Law spoke to those who were *"under the Law."* Romans 3:19. These words, which were written to show the universal need for salvation, were misused to silence those who reminded us *"the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God."* I Corinthians 6:9.

I soon realized these words had become "the great consolation" of the modern church. In a strange way its use comforted people by falsely assuring them that every believer was sinful. The thinking seemed to be, "Why should I be troubled about my iniquity? If everyone is unrighteous just as I am, then I must be alright."

As this mindset took hold, conviction over sin evaporated from the church house. The truth that the blood of Jesus Christ delivers us from sin was discarded as churches rushed to embrace the error that the sins a believer commits are covered and hidden from the eyes of God.

In the decades since, the blindness has only increased. Churches across America now open their services welcoming visitors by declaring, "We are all sinners just like you." I admit that it almost seems foolish to disagree. Fornication, pornography, profanity, and covetousness fill the lives of professing believers in staggering proportions. Although we are

told Christians are sinners just like those in the world, in many cases, it is worse than in the world. It is as though Paul was speaking of today when he wrote, *"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles..."* I Corinthians 5:1.

It seems the only damnable sin a believer can commit today is to deny the assertion that God's people are still sinners. That person is immediately assaulted with "proofs" they are both self-righteous and exceedingly sinful! They are told: "If you exceeded the speed limit, you sinned!" "If you got upset with your children, you sinned!" "If you had a less than perfect thought, you sinned." Really? **The church has criminalized "being human" so they can justify being sinful.** Jesus referred to this sort of religious blindness, saying, *"Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."* Matthew 23:24. Yes, we are human and may come short of the full manifestation of Christ, but there is a vast difference between being human and being sinful. The Bible never says, "Those who get upset with their children shall not inherit the kingdom of God," ...but it does say the fornicator shall not!

The "wise" among us tell us the Biblical statements concerning what children of God DO NOT DO only mean they do not repetitiously "practice" those things. Even many Bible translations have retranslated the words *"does not commit sin"* I John 3:9 into *"does not practice sin."* Has anyone considered how foolish that is? How many times must a man "practice" rape before he is actually a rapist? Must a person commit murder multiple times before they are a murderer? Are you a thief only if you steal on a regular basis? The things which the apostles called sin are things those who know God simply do not do. In fact, the Bible says they *"cannot"* do it! I John 3:9. If you cannot believe me, can you believe the Apostle John? He wrote, ***"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him."*** I John 3:6.

The church desperately needs ministers who will boldly stand for the truth and say, "Yes, we are human, but we are not all sinners! Jesus Christ shed his blood *'to take away our sin'* I John 3:5, and that is exactly what He has done!"

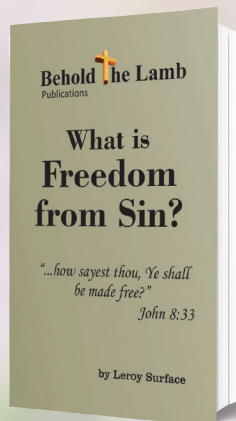
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What is Freedom from Sin?

"...how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"
John 8:33

by Leroy Surface



Secrets to Answered Prayer

Know that God is the source for all you need, so don't forget to ask

When you pray, do you have a vague feeling that something is lacking, that there isn't any power in your prayers? Do you struggle with doubt or fear, or simply lack confidence that God even hears you at all?

I used to have feelings like this and would think, "Maybe I didn't say the right thing, or pray long enough, or my words weren't eloquent enough." It was so frustrating because I didn't want to waste time wondering if my prayers were doing any good. After I pray, I want to know that God is working, and my prayers make a difference.

It's easy to complicate our relationship with God, thinking we have to do certain things a certain way for them to be effective. But I've discovered that powerful, life-changing, dynamic prayer is amazingly simple!

It's vitally important for us to have faith in God when we pray. Hebrews 11:6 (NIV) says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

Ask yourself, "Do I believe God hears me, that He cares about me and wants to be involved in every area of my life?" If we don't really believe God loves us and wants to help us, we will struggle to have faith in Him. That's why knowing and experiencing the love of God is critical to developing a powerful prayer life.

It's also important to approach God with sincere hearts. James 5:16b (AMPC) says, "The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working]." A sincere heart is focused on God, trusting that He hears you and will answer; it's all about the attitude of your heart toward Him.

It's exciting to get the revelation that God loves us, cares for us and wants to help us. But we have a part to play in getting the things God has for us—we have to ask (see James 4:2).

Now, we have to ask for God's will to be done, not just for the things we think we want or should have apart from Him. James 4:1a (AMPC) tells us that striving to get what we want based on our carnal or fleshly desires leads to "strife (discord and feuds) ... conflicts (quarrels and fightings)." This causes us to be jealous, covet what others have and become angry when we can't "obtain [the gratification, the contentment, and the happiness] we are seeking (James 4:2b).

Many times our problems are caused by thinking we're unhappy because we don't have all the stuff we want. But the reality is only God can give us what we're longing for



**"Only God can give us
what we're longing
for in our hearts."**

in our hearts. He alone is the source of righteousness, peace and joy (Rom. 14:17). And we will never enjoy life until we learn to abide in Him and trust Him to do what's best for us.

If you're not sure whether you're asking for God's will in your life (and we all go through times like this), then you need to take time to just abide in Christ. In John 15:7 (AMPC), Jesus says, "If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you."

To abide means to live, dwell and remain; it's not just spending time with God on Sunday morning and then going through your week doing what you want apart from Him. God wants to do life with us Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday too! As we spend time studying His Word, meditating on the Word, communicating with Him through prayer and asking Him to fulfill His plans for us, we will know His will in our hearts.

It's an amazing privilege to be able to talk to God! I want to encourage you to come to Him with humility and ask Him for the desires that are in your heart. Tell Him, "Lord, I don't want anything You don't want me to have. If I'm asking for anything that's not in Your plan for me, don't give it to me. I'm trusting You and want You to be in control of my life." Pray about everything that's on your heart and keep it simple. Remember, prayer is simply talking to God, and you can pray anytime, anywhere, all day long ... and He will answer.

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Prepare the Way of the Lord

5 steps you can take to get ready for the next great awakening

The chaos, confusion and fear generated by our nation's preoccupation with the presidential elections and the COVID-19 pandemic have led many in the body of Christ to withdraw not only from their normal life patterns but also from their divine assignments. God is the Lord of the harvest (Matt. 9:38), and He will soon bring into the church the greatest harvest of souls in one period of time in human history. It is our responsibility to be ready to husband the harvest God brings us and to ensure that the fruit of the laborers He sends into the field is ushered safely into the fullness of Christian maturity. In this way, Jesus Christ will receive the full reward for the sufferings He endured while He was physically on earth.

It is certainly not unusual for Satan and the powers of this evil age to anticipate a great move of God and work to prevent or limit its effectiveness. We see this in the Egyptians' attempt to preempt Moses' work as the deliverer by killing male babies and in Herod's attempt to stop the coming Messiah by killing infants under age 2 after the birth of Christ. We in the body of Christ must not remain passive observers while God's enemies marshal their human partners to interdict His plans. Prayer, praise and repentance must be the foundation of everything we do now, but we cannot be passive observers as the principalities, powers and forces of wickedness in heavenly places impose their demonic agenda on the earth. We cannot hide in our homes in fear, but we must be bold to prepare ourselves, our families and our communities for the heavenly agenda God is about to release.

What can we do to prepare the way of the Lord for the coming great awakening (Mark 1:3)? Consider these five steps:

First, we must repent for every sin in our lives and cleanse ourselves of all generational iniquity. This would include overt sins as well as sins of disobedience and generational sins attached to involvement in demonic secret societies, criminal activities and addictions. We certainly need to repent for lukewarm spiritual attitudes and worldly lifestyles.

Second, we need to be sure our finances are in order with God's plan. We need to get out of debt, break and repent of business and personal covenants not in alignment with God and ensure we are preparing a place in our personal lives to receive the harvest God is sending. A business-as-usual attitude that avoids any and all nonessential inconvenience and stress will not be capable of the kind of effort and hard work needed to reap, gather



“We cannot be passive observers as the principalities, powers and forces of wickedness in heavenly places impose their demonic agenda on the earth.”

and preserve the wave of new believers and the sudden maturing of previously nominal Christians that will soon occur.

Third, fivefold ministries will need to learn how to put aside personal agendas and work together in spiritual unity for the sake of the kingdom and the eternal welfare of the new believers. The purposes of God in great awakenings always go far beyond the growth and blessing of one church, stream or denomination. Groups who fail to put God first, ignore the work of the Lord of the harvest and choose to criticize the work of the Holy Spirit in other churches and ministries will find their groups withering while others flourish.

Fourth, we cannot afford to tell God what we will and will not do, where we will and will not go and whom we will and will not associate with when the revival arrives. The Holy Spirit will not only show the hand of God in power, but will insist that those who say they are His follow His leading. In great revival, it is extremely dangerous to ignore the Spirit when He tells you what to do. The Spirit is the Lord (2 Cor. 3:17), and He expects God's children to obey Him.

Finally, the anointing of the Holy Spirit to heal the sick, prophesy and deliver the demonized must be given a prominent place in ministries that seek after revival. New believers and newly awakened believers need to have a new spiritual foundation built on the power of God, not human wisdom (1 Cor. 2:4), or their conversion experiences will quickly come into conformity with godless ideologies and worldly behaviors. This must not happen if this next great awakening is to be a world-transforming movement. Be prepared for God to mightily use you!

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Compiled by Nadia Joy Schult

Evangelist Daniel Kolenda shares at a crusade in Tanzania.



Christ for all Nations Leads More Than 53,000 to Christ in Tanzania

CfaN helped new believers connect with local churches to get established in their faith.

Christ for all Nations has spread the gospel through Operation Decapolis, a five-city evangelistic crusade in the East African nation of Tanzania.

In November 2020, CfaN held ministry campaigns in five cities over two weeks. Crews traveled to Arusha, Kahama, Singida, Shinyanga and Tabora to set up sound systems, market the services and welcome locals. Each campaign lasted seven days.

More than 350,000 people attended the multi-city initiative, and 53,153 of them declared they had a first-time salvation experience. The new Christians shared their contact information, so a local church can follow up and help them begin a meaningful, lifelong walk with Jesus.

Many people also reported miracles, including physical healings, spiritual deliverance, restored relationships and freedom from sin and addiction.

Bret Sipek, CfaN's lead coordinator for the Decapolis pilot program, reflected on what God did in Tanzania.

"Our goal for each city is to train 1,000 local evangelists, to be able to preach in the streets and markets, and to encourage and prepare 10,000 believers to pray for their loved ones and to testify," Sipek says. "Not everyone is an evangelist, but every born-again believer has a unique story—his own testimony—and he can share it with unsaved friends."

During Operation Decapolis, the ministry surpassed 80 million documented decisions for Christ.



Oklahoma Church Blesses Families, Groups With Millions

The church even bought out an entire store of sneakers for a boys' home.

Christmas came early for Transformation Church in Bixby, Oklahoma. The people in the Tulsa-area congregation were blessed with \$3.5 million in gifts during their "Crazy Faith" offering in 2020.

Led by Michael and Natalie Todd, the megachurch encouraged its congregation and community with a "Giving Spree Sunday" service in which Transformation blessed families and nonprofits with debt forgiveness. One especially downtrodden family even received a new house.

The church gave \$200,000 toward personal debts. But Transformation's generosity didn't stop with the congregation. The congregation gave \$1.55 million to other church communities, and \$65,000 went toward buying out Silhouette Sneakers and Art, an entire shoe store, to donate the shoes to a boys' home in Tulsa.

The store owner, Vaneeta Cooper, says Transformation Church "made a lot of dreams come true this past weekend" and expressed gratitude on behalf of the store and the boys' home receiving the donations.



Michael Todd

Regent University Names Michele Bachmann a Dean

Regent University's board of trustees named former U.S. Congresswoman Michele Bachmann as the new dean of the Robertson School of Government, effective Jan. 1, 2021.

Bachmann's political history is extensive, to say the least. She received a bachelor's degree in political science and



Michelle Bachmann

English at Winona State University and a Juris Doctor degree from Oral Roberts University. Her political

career stemmed from homeschooling her five children and along with her husband, Marcus, fostering 23 children. With a desire to advocate for education reform, she ran for and won a Senate seat in Minnesota, becoming the first Republican woman from the state elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Bachmann's extensive background in government equips her to embark on her new adventure at Regent, which Pat Robertson founded.

"It has been the highest honor to serve the American people and to uphold conservative principles on a national scale," she says. "I am thrilled to now direct my focus to preparing the next generation of government leaders at Regent University."

Netflix Alternative Offers Edifying Faith-Based Content

"We don't need evil in our media."

Wary of the negativity and ungodly entertainment companies like Netflix have produced, Apostle James Alford, founder and leader of Righteousness Ministries International in Marietta, Georgia, decided to form his own media company. His streaming platform, Saltflix, provides believers with a venue to view faith-based and edifying content.

"This is a place where you can go and see content that is actually going to agree with your faith," Alford says. "My goal is just to touch people and let them see how God, through film, can transform people because the devil has had his way in media over the last several decades. He doesn't need a physical church because he's transformed the nation, the world, through the media. But we don't need evil in our media."

Alford's plan is working, as Saltflix films, TV and music content have made a huge impact, he says. He also has his own podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network called *Kingdom Authority With James Alford*.



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Christian-Jewish Partnership Sets Record in Saving Lives in Israel

Tens of thousands benefited from the relief effort supporting the elderly.

During the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic, the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews joined with the Israel Defense Forces and Latet, an Israeli humanitarian organization, to provide emergency aid to tens of thousands of elderly people. This led to the creation of a \$20 million emergency fund and an ongoing partnership with Israel's Ministry of Welfare to distribute emergency aid to all 256 municipalities in the nation.

The ongoing support presents a new record in the number of people helped, 2 million.

The Fellowship is an interfaith humanitarian organization founded in 1983. It promotes better understanding and cooperation between Christians and Jews to build broad support for Israel. Today, IFCJ is the largest channel of Christian support for Israel.

"No one could have anticipated the challenges and hardship 2020 would bring," said Yael Eckstein, IFCJ president and CEO. "Humbly, I can say that, thanks to our supporters, we were able to rise to the occasion. Whenever the most basic needs must be met, we are the partner that Israel and Jewish communities around the world know they can trust."



Jonathan Cahn

'Harbinger II' author Jonathan Cahn Enjoys Grand Slam in Publishing

Jonathan Cahn's latest bestseller, *The Harbinger II: The Return*, enjoyed remarkable success as of January 2021, four months after its release. And not only that, but three of Cahn's previous books have now joined *The Harbinger II* as high-performing titles on the latest Evangelical Christian Publishers Association Bestsellers list.

Stan Jantz, ECPA's president and CEO, had pointed out earlier that "the topic and timeliness of [Cahn's new] book are certainly contributing factors to its success.

Among other bestseller lists, *The Harbinger II* also still ranks at No. 10 on *The New York Times* Hardcover Fiction list.

The new book is a sequel to the original *The Harbinger* and asks the compelling questions: Is America heading to judgment in a time of enormous "shakings"? What lies ahead for our troubled country? *The Harbinger II* provides prophetic, biblical answers. Now that the "shakings" have been occurring right in front of our eyes, the question many Americans are asking is: "How much time is left for us?"



Ethiopian Jews make Aliyah to Israel in December (above). Ukrainian Jews make Aliyah in November (inset).

INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS | CAHN: SEAN ROBERTS

BIBLE READING GUIDE



Follow our daily reading plan in each issue of *Charisma* to read through the Modern English Version Bible in one year. The plan is also available online at brg.charismamag.com.

"RISE UP, MY LOVE, my fair one, and come away. For now the winter has past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come." —Song of Songs 2:10-12

Mar. 1	Num. 28-29; Mark 8
Mar. 2	Num. 30-31; Mark 9
Mar. 3	Num. 32-33; Mark 10
Mar. 4	Num. 34-36; Mark 11
Mar. 5	Deut. 1-2; Mark 12
Mar. 6	Deut. 3-4; Ps. 36; Mark 13
Mar. 7	Deut. 5-6; Ps. 43; Mark 14
Mar. 8	Deut. 7-9; Mark 15
Mar. 9	Deut. 10-12; Mark 16
Mar. 10	Deut. 13-15; Gal. 1
Mar. 11	Deut. 16-18; Ps. 38; Gal. 2
Mar. 12	Deut. 19-21; Gal. 3
Mar. 13	Deut. 22-24; Gal. 4
Mar. 14	Deut. 25-27; Gal. 5
Mar. 15	Deut. 28-29; Gal. 6
Mar. 16	Deut. 30-31; Ps. 40; 1 Cor. 1
Mar. 17	Deut. 32-34; 1 Cor. 2
Mar. 18	Josh. 1-2; Ps. 37; 1 Cor. 3
Mar. 19	Josh. 3-6; 1 Cor. 4
Mar. 20	Josh. 7-8; Ps. 69; 1 Cor. 5
Mar. 21	Josh. 9-11; 1 Cor. 6
Mar. 22	Josh. 12-14; 1 Cor. 7
Mar. 23	Josh. 15-17; 1 Cor. 8
Mar. 24	Josh. 18-20; 1 Cor. 9
Mar. 25	Josh. 21-22; Ps. 47; 1 Cor. 10
Mar. 26	Josh. 23-24; Ps. 44; 1 Cor. 11
Mar. 27	Judg. 1-3; 1 Cor. 12
Mar. 28	Judg. 4-5; Ps. 39, 41; 1 Cor. 13
Mar. 29	Judg. 6-7; Ps. 52; 1 Cor. 14
Mar. 30	Judg. 8; Ps. 42; 1 Cor. 15
Mar. 31	Judg. 9-10; Ps. 49; 1 Cor. 16

CHARISMATA

Updated Bible Translation Allows Holy Spirit to Speak in Personal Way

The Lockman Foundation started with a passion for the Word of God in 1942, and the same passion drives the nonprofit today. Known for producing the bestselling Amplified Version and New American Standard Bible along with multiple international language translations and updates, Lockman is a world leader in Bible translation.

Last year, Lockman launched a 2020 version of the NASB which, Executive Vice President Pike Lambeth says, retains the version's longtime value of remaining true to the original languages while meeting readers' needs for an accessible, easily understandable English translation. That's important, he said, so that the Holy Spirit can speak through the Word in the most personal way possible.

"It helps the reader really see what the original word was so it can speak to them as personally as possible," Lambeth says. "Our goal is to provide an accurate text and let it speak to the reader directly."

Although the update to Lockman's best-known Bible uses more contemporary language, translators also worked to preserve the integrity of the original texts.



Former Atheist Credits God for Sobriety

Sir Anthony Hopkins had to choose between life and death.

Award-winning actor and former atheist Sir Anthony Hopkins turned 83 at the end of 2020. But the beloved Hollywood icon is also celebrating 45 years of sobriety after a miraculous intervention.

In 1975, a woman asked him at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, "Why don't you just trust in God?" Hopkins admits that he was at such a point of desperation that he thought, *Well, why not?* As he recalls his addiction and powerlessness to change on his own, he tells of a small inner voice that asked him to choose: life or death. After turning to God, his destructive desire for alcohol disappeared.

Aware of the grief many experienced throughout 2020, the well-known actor encourages today's youth with the message he heard 45 years ago that changed his life.

"Today is the tomorrow you were so worried about yesterday," he says.

Hopkins was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II. As an actor, director and producer, he has received many accolades, including Academy Awards, Primetime Emmy awards and Screen Actors Guild awards. And throughout his life, he believes the "mighty forces" of the Lord were at work in every season, good and bad.

| COVER STORY

RECLAIMING BIBLICAL MANHOOD



Godly men must take their rightful place for the sake of marriage, family and culture

BY DR. TIM CLINTON

An international space exploration research team conducted a study on the possible colonization of Mars. When the findings were presented to NASA, the study suggested that “all-female astronaut crews could reproduce in space without the help of accompanying men.” The study concluded that frozen sperm samples exposed to simulations of weightlessness in space maintained the same characteristics as sperm on the ground with gravity. This raised “hopes that a sperm bank could one day be set up in space to help populate new worlds.” It also meant that future missions to Mars could consist of female-only space crews.

This study was met with great fanfare, especially among feminist and anti-masculinity groups. In response to the female-only astronaut crews, one individual wrote, “But who’s going to kill the spiders on the ship?” My wife, Julie, would have said, “It sure won’t be Tim!”

Obviously someone was trying to add some humor to the dialogue, but there’s an element of the statement that rings true in our cores. Men are good at killing bugs, along with doing a lot of other meaningful tasks. God created men for a reason—not just for their sperm.

Specific Roles

The world was built on the backs of strong men. When statements such as “Men built this society” are made, one almost feels the need to apologize. Surely someone is going to be offended, yet it is not meant to be sexist or misogynistic. We are not saying that women can’t kill spiders and do all sorts of things that men can do. They certainly can, and they do. Men are not better than women. They are certainly not smarter! This is not meant to minimize women in any way. We need strong, godly women in the fight too. Men can’t survive without them and what they bring to the table. But it’s unreasonable to say men and women are the same. They are equal, but they are not the same. To not recognize this is to throw common sense out the window. Women are strong emotionally, physically and spiritually, just in a different way than men. If men had to go through labor pains, society would have died off years ago! No, women are very strong—in some ways stronger than men. But this is about men and why men matter. Men, it’s OK to embrace how God made you.

Both men and women are equally unique, each reflecting the image of God in their own way. “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Gen. 1:27, NIV). God purposefully designed men and women the way they are, and that is a good thing. He said so Himself. “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was very good*” (Gen. 1:31, NKJV).

continued »



“Without masculine men, everything falls into disorder, leaving gaping holes for the enemy to occupy.”

the contrary, to embrace God’s order is a good thing, bringing about ultimate freedom for both men and women. Thank God for all the women heroes who have displayed unshakable courage. The world desperately needs the gifts and insights that only women can bring. They are critical to the equation, and godly women need to rise up too and fully embrace their womanhood.

Nonetheless the fact remains that men are difference makers. Without masculine men, everything falls into disorder, leaving gaping holes for the enemy to occupy.

Flip the Script

On Jan. 1, 1929, the California Golden Bears played the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California. Early in the second quarter, before more than 66,000 screaming fans, California’s Roy Riegels scooped up a Georgia Tech fumble and began running like an Olympic sprinter toward the goal line. There was only one problem: Riegels ran 69 yards in the wrong direction! Finally he was taken down by one of his own teammates at the one-yard line. Riegels was so upset and humiliated by his mistake that he felt there was no way he could show his face before the crowd, much less play another down. On the bench all he could do was hang his head in shame.

During halftime in the locker room, it was announced that everyone who started the first half would be starting the second half, but when the rest of his team

The most obvious purpose for our differences is the procreation of the human species. Without our biological distinctions the species would die off. However, our distinctiveness goes much further than that, into our God-given instincts, ways of thinking, gifts and roles. Man was made to complement woman, and woman was made to complement man. All of it may seem extremely elementary. And it is extremely elementary, except that the forces against us are set on blurring these commonsense natural lines of creation. In California, for example, the legislature passed the Gender Recognition Act, allowing for a third, nonbinary gender category on driver’s licenses and other state-issued identification. Other states have followed suit. State Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson said, “We are now a state recognizing the nonbinary designation as a gender.” In other words, and I’m paraphrasing, “We don’t accept the natural two-gender order, male and female, the way God created them. There are more genders, and we must not offend them.”

Please understand. This is not intended as an attack on individuals who struggle with their sexual identity. Rather, it is about the way God-defined masculinity is being undermined and what we can do about it. Those who want to deny or confuse the inherent biological order and biblical roles do so in an effort to normalize an unnatural worldview. In fact, since the Garden of Eden, one of Satan’s goals has been to pervert or blur what God called good. The great evangelist Billy Sunday said, “No one can read the Bible in a thoughtful way without being impressed with the fact that it makes much of manhood, and holds it up as something that should be sought after with diligence and perseverance. In fact, the Bible exalts and emphasizes manhood in a remarkable way, and shows that real manhood is a great thing in the world.”

Our culture, however, is being indoctrinated to believe that our God-given roles are narrow and restrictive, bigoted or hateful. On

headed back out on the field, Riegels remained where he was. He said, “Coach, I can’t do it. I’ve ruined you. I’ve ruined my school. I’ve ruined myself. I couldn’t face the crowd in that stadium to save my life.”

“Roy, get up and go back,” his coach ordered. “The game is only half over!”

Ashamed and distraught yet urged on by his coach and teammates, Riegels somehow willed himself back in the game. Not only did he play again, but he turned in an all-star performance, even blocking a Georgia Tech punt. Unfortunately it wasn’t enough. Georgia Tech

According to a 2009 study by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, 51% of teenagers 17 and under believe that lying and cheating are necessary to succeed. This shift in attitude has been particularly strong among young men, rendering them less likely (and able) to live up to God’s call to honesty and integrity.

According to an article in *Psychology Today*, “Men are overwhelmingly represented in several diagnostic categories, sometimes called ‘impulse control disorders’—predilections that lead to alcohol and drug abuse, sexual misbehaviors of various kinds, violent outbursts, delinquency,

“Men can change—and are changing—by the power of God.”

wound up winning 8 to 7. Riegels’ blunder had cost the game, and he was tagged “Wrong Way” Riegels for life. The great news in this story is that Riegels did not let that negative label define him. In fact, he flipped the script and turned it into a positive that made him a better man.

Just as with Roy Riegels, there are many unflattering labels on men that cause us to hang our heads in shame. Men have been running in the wrong direction for too long.

While it is hard to get accurate figures for the number of married men who have cheated on their wives, a 2010-2016 survey reported that 20% of husbands have affairs, with higher percentages among older married men.

A survey reported that 74% of all married men said they would have an affair if they would never get caught.

A 2016 Barna study reported that 64% of Christian men view pornography at least once a month, and 21% say they are addicted. One in 5 youth pastors and 1 in 7 senior pastors use pornography regularly.

problems holding down a job and an overrepresentation in almost all categories of criminal activity (with consequent overrepresentation in arrest records and prison terms). They’re also more likely to steal, cheat and engage in various criminal activities for money (from small-time drug dealers to big-time Wall Street swindlers.)” I could go on and on and on. But I want to make this point crystal clear. These aren’t merely stats and disorders. Much of it is also sin.

Men are in deep trouble with sin. And sin doesn’t just destroy our own souls. It destroys our relationships, our families and the souls of the ones we love most. When we don’t step up and turn away from ungodliness, sin rules us, and the consequences are frightening.

As men, we have to do better. Let’s face it. Women are not the problem. We are. James Dobson summed it up well when he wrote, “Nations that are populated largely by immature, immoral, weak-willed, cowardly and self-indulgent men cannot and will not long endure. These types of men

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include those who sire and abandon their children; who cheat on the ones they love; who lie, steal and covet; who hate their countrymen; and who serve no god but money. That is the direction culture is taking today's boys." Jesus couldn't have been any plainer when He stated, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man" (Mark 7:21-23).

Men, we need to get the smelling salts out and wake up from our comas! We need to let go of the shame because of our screwups, get back in the game and play our hearts out!

Toxic Behavior Versus Toxic Masculinity

No doubt, a man's behavior can be toxic, or sinful, if you want to put it another way. Society's answer to this dilemma, therefore, has been to label masculinity as toxic and to emasculate and feminize us. Justin Trudeau, the prime minister of Canada, said that he is raising his children, including his two sons, as feminists "to change our culture of sexism." This solution does not work. Instead it's destroying men. While the behavior of some (not all) men is toxic, their masculinity is not. The negative stats don't paint the whole picture. Men can change—and are changing—by the power of God. And that starts by dealing with our sin problem.

The good news is, men, you have a choice. You do not have to be ruled by toxic behavior, which is sin. Your masculinity is not sinful; it is good. Embrace it. The strength that can be used to mistreat women is the same strength and power that can be used to protect them, stand up for them and cherish them. Harness your masculinity for good. Strength under control is a strength that can be used for good. Just as Roy Riegels didn't let his wrong-way run ultimately define him, negative labels



Dr. Tim Clinton

and statistics do not have to define what a man is or what a man can become—even if he has messed up or has exhibited toxic behavior.

Not Toxic, Not Better, but Godly

As stated above, the world's remedy to toxic behavior is the emasculation and feminization of men. Michael Ian Black, in an op-ed for *The New York Times*, wrote, "There has to be a way to expand what it means to be a man without losing our masculinity." Black is right. There is a way. Allie Stuckey of PragerU almost got it right when she said, "The answer to toxic masculinity isn't less masculinity; it's better masculinity." We say the answer isn't better masculinity or, honestly, even traditional masculinity but godly masculinity.

After God created both male and female and deemed them good, sin entered the world, corrupting our natures. All of us are bent toward sin. Men, even traditional men, can't be better on their own. Only by living through the power of the Holy Spirit can a man fulfill the purpose for which he was designed. Without the Spirit of God working in us, we are going to exhibit toxic behavior because we live in a fallen, sinful world, and we have a sin nature. The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 7:18a (ESV), "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh." Though his spirit man was perfect and born again, Paul still had his flesh to deal with. So does every man.

The good news is the Christian man has the Holy Spirit within him. God's answer to toxic masculinity

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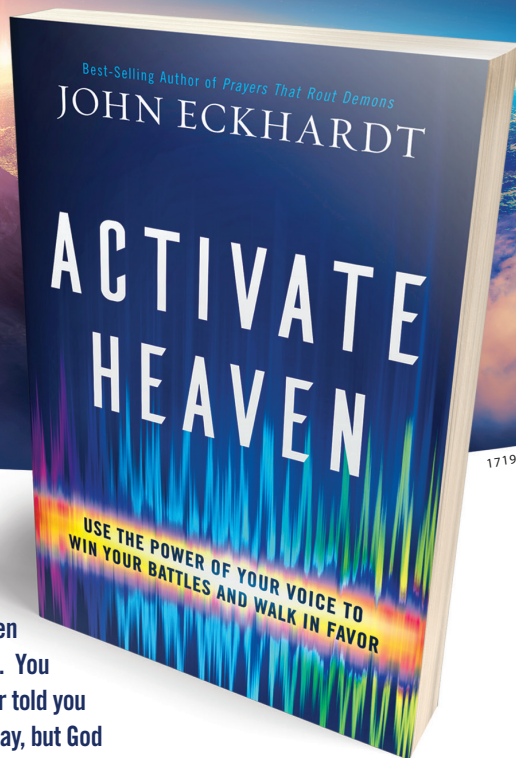
This new release empowers men and encourages them to be difference-makers who have a positive impact on their culture.

is men filled with His Spirit. The Scripture says that Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. When we abide in the vine (Jesus), we will bear much fruit, and apart from Him, we can do nothing. Abide in Jesus, and we bear much fruit. Do not abide, and our flesh rules. Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” The fruit of the Spirit is the exact opposite of the toxic behavior many men exhibit and, I dare to say, encompasses the qualities most women want from men and what society needs from men. The way it happens, however, is not through emasculation but through the Holy Spirit’s control. This type of manhood is the key to turning this thing around—godly men fulfilling their masculine roles by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, coming alive in them and bearing fruit.

Men, we have a choice. We can give in to sin and toxic behavior, or we can embrace righteousness. We can stay on the bench after our screwups with our heads hung in shame, or we can rise up, get back in the game and let God flip the script of our lives. ◀

DR. TIM CLINTON is president of the American Association of Christian Counselors. He also serves as executive director of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute and recurring co-host of Dr. James Dobson’s FamilyTalk radio show. Licensed as a professional counselor and marriage and family therapist, Dr. Clinton spends much of his time working with Christian leaders and professional athletes. He has written or edited nearly 30 books.

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| Q&A



TRUE MASCULINITY

Q&A with professional counselor Dr. Tim Clinton



At a time in culture when men are put down and their masculinity is debased, they can either live a life of defeat or stand in their God-given inheritance. As an observer of culture, a student of the Word and a highly trained professional counselor, Dr. Tim Clinton has much to say in addressing biblical masculinity, what it is and how to walk in it. *Charisma* asked Dr. Clinton, president of the American Association of Christian Counselors, to share his Scripture-based views on this topic as it affects men, the family and culture.

You have long been a proponent for strong families. What led you to write a book that shows the importance of biblical masculinity?

It's no secret that there has been a real beatdown on men in the media and our culture. If you are a male, you are pretty much labeled as bad and in need of serious help. I don't know about you, but I'm tired of hearing that men are nothing more than deadbeat dads, porn addicts, terrible lovers, abusers and disengaged buffoons who only care about themselves and what they can get out of life. I'm also tired of the radical push to feminize men. Sure, we have seen this toxic behavior in men, but that doesn't mean masculinity is toxic. Why? Because research shows that men matter, that dads matter. The statistics don't lie. You take fathers out of the picture, and things go haywire. The research on fatherlessness is stunning. Now more than ever, what we really need are godly men: men who know and harness their role, gifts and influence for good. Bottom line is that a lot of men have let down their guard, given up ground to the evil one and/or stepped out of the fight. What they need is to first understand their role and significance in this journey called life and to step up and get back into the fight. Strong men are the walls and gatekeepers for the family. Take them out, and the enemy has a clear shot at the family structure, which is the foundation of our Christian culture. The progressive culture is trying to tear down the family unit, and that starts with men and masculinity. Why? Because progressives know men are the key. In *Take It Back*, we wanted to create a word of help, hope and encouragement to embrace biblical masculinity. *Take It Back* is anchored in the belief that God made men unique for a purpose and reason.

continued »



“Make no mistake, Jesus was masculine in the traditional sense. Yet He was compassionate and sensitive to the pains of those around Him.”

Please give an example of how you've seen male leadership impact you and your family.

My dad was a part of what Tom Brokaw called the “Greatest Generation,” World War II veterans. He faithfully served in the U.S. Navy and spent time on the USS Pennsylvania in the South Pacific. He loved God and took seriously Nehemiah 4:14 (NKJV), “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and fearsome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your

houses.” I still remember some of the war stories he would tell and loved the part how when he got home he saw our mother walking down the streets of DuBois, Pennsylvania, and won her heart once again. I never heard my dad ever raise his voice to her. I still remember being by her bedside when he said his last words of goodbye to her. He taught us to love and be loved, to stand strong in what we believe and to let our lives reflect our beliefs. Even though he served three churches as a pastor, he always made our family a priority. He and I would hunt and fish together, throw a ball, go swimming

and kneel together. I often describe him as the kindest man I have ever met. As I look at my everyday life, I have learned there are so many things that compete for our attention and affection, distractions that get in the way of what and who really matter. As a man, it's easy to let your guard down and fail to love well or be present for your spouse—or for those little noses pressed up against the windowpane waiting for you to get home. It's also easy to get discouraged in what you do and fail to provide and protect those you love. Research is clear that the consequences for this are horrible.

When you think about it, if men/dads didn't matter, this discussion wouldn't matter all that much either, would it?

You talk a lot about the need for men to reclaim “true masculinity.” How do you define it?

David's words to his son Solomon to “be strong, and show yourself a man” (1 Kings 2:2b, ESV) were carefully chosen to help him stay anchored on what he would need to be and do to lead the children of Israel in the days ahead. I believe David wasn't focused on talent, skill or determination but rather on being a man after God's own heart—to do His will. The focus is more on character. To me, there is no room for a culture of sexism or toxic behavior in true biblical masculinity. Jesus, for example, was a carpenter who knew how to work. He had calloused hands. He stood alone in the face of opposition, even threats and crowds. He knew how to wield a whip. Make no mistake, Jesus was masculine in the traditional sense. Yet He was compassionate and sensitive to the pains of those around Him. He wept and honored women in a culture that didn't. Jesus is the ultimate example of biblical masculinity.

As a father, how do you approach this topic with your son?

We are admonished to love both in word and deed. I believe that a lot of what is imparted to our children is both taught and caught, that they listen to our words and watch our lives closely. As a dad, I have wanted my children to know how much of a priority they are to me by being present physically and emotionally. As a result, I didn't just go to games; I coached my children until I couldn't be their coach anymore. That meant I passed on a lot of speaking and traveling opportunities. I keep learning every day that the power of showing up is half the battle. I also believe “being present” opens the door for meaningful conversations

about life and roles at those critical teachable moments, especially when life is being unkind and brutal. Busy, preoccupied dads miss those moments. I also believe as dads, we have to model what it means to love God, their mother and their siblings. It also involves talking about spiritual things, praying for and with your kids and family matters. Our children see and know our hearts. I have tried to live out gentleness and kindness toward them and to own responsibility for my actions. We all (dads included) need heavy doses of grace and forgiveness. I have also wanted him/them to know that being a man means being someone who is

“There is a stirring in the hearts of men. There is fire burning in their souls to step up and into the moment.”

fun to be with. Life is an adventure, and we all need encouragement and courage to face and embrace this life. Emotion regulation is important too, such as being slow to anger, to listen first and then respond. Kids also need to know that you will show up and fight for them when they have been wronged. That is so important. That's what dads do. I've also wanted to let them know that God loves them more deeply than I do. I am reminded here of William Wallace's words in the movie *Braveheart*: “Every man dies. Not every man really lives.” To me, that is about standing for something, having fun, enjoying your moments and remembering what Josh McDowell once said, “You don't make memories with your children, but rather, you are the memory.”

How can a local church best help men reclaim biblical masculinity?

Create a culture that honors, encourages and engages men to know, serve and live out their everyday passions in alignment with the Word of God. Teach them how to be godly, good fathers, to enjoy and celebrate their gifts and abilities in and through ministry outlets, whether building engines, fishing, teaching music, sports or mentoring. Have older leaders mentor and reach out to younger men. Involve youth with activities and Bible studies that include men of all ages. Don't always separate the youth from the older. They feed off each other.

What should parents keep in mind as they discuss gender and masculinity with their children?

Don't excuse or confuse toxic behavior with masculinity. Be sure to teach skills that endear the heart of the fathers to their children and the children to their fathers. Be careful not to beat men up. They get enough of that. But rather challenge and encourage them to do good works. Teach them how to love and be loved. Do you know why? Because deep down inside, most men do care how they are doing as a son, dad, husband, as a servant of the most high God.

What closing thoughts would you like to add?

Something is happening. I believe there is a stirring in the hearts of men. There is fire burning in their souls to step up and into the moment. I see it in the next generation of fathers. I believe it is the work of God. Can you imagine what could happen to families, churches, communities, nations if men would take their rightful place? Heaven and earth are on tiptoes waiting. It's go time! ◀

THE WAR ON GENDER

There are now 71 ways to list a person's gender on Facebook. The church must be prepared to address the growing transgender movement.

BY AJ HALL

Something strange is happening in America today when it comes to gender. Facebook now offers 71 gender categories. Popular actress Ellen Page has announced that she's "transitioning" and now will be living as a man named Elliot Page. Several other high-profile celebrities have announced they are raising their young boys to be girls, or vice versa.

LGBTQ philosophy has not just influenced trendy tech companies and progressive Hollywood, but it has also made its way into our schools, universities and medical care. Some hospitals are ending the practice of listing gender at birth, while social scientists in academia have faced intense backlash if their findings run counter to this new worldview. In some elementary schools, teachers are told if a boy wants to use the girls' restroom, he should be allowed to do that since he "identifies" as a girl.

LGBTQ as a Belief System

I believe the best way to understand the LGBTQ movement is as a belief system. I view a LGBTQ proponent the same way I do a Muslim, Hindu or any other adherent to a religious sect. LGBTQ stands for "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning." The cornerstone of their doctrine, I believe, was laid down in 1955 by psychologist John Money when he theorized

that sex and gender were two distinct concepts.

"Biological sex may be genetic, but gender is merely a social construct," Money says.

More than 60 years later, this loose view of gender combined with teachings on "sexual orientation identity" have formed the core of LGBTQ belief. This belief system includes an ever-increasing list of concepts that take personal faith to accept, like "nonbinary" people, "pansexual" people, "bisexual transgender women" and "lesbian cisgender women."

According to the philosophy, I'm considered a heterosexual "cisgender male" (I identify with the same gender as my biological sex) and I hold a binary (male and female only) view on gender.

How should we respond to all this?

I'll be the first to admit, when I read an article by a transgender author basically saying that people like me (a "cisgender" who holds a traditional view of gender) should not be allowed to exist, I can become afraid. I clearly see the violence that can result from such dogmatic, hate-filled rhetoric. I can be tempted to retaliate, mock or attack these people's beliefs, and my fear is only amplified when I see this worldview gaining more and more influence in Western culture.

But listen to me: We must never give in to the spirit of fear. The great apostle Paul taught



us, “God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and self-control” (2 Tim. 1:7).

So I refuse to be afraid, because fear and love cannot coexist. The apostle John taught “there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18a). Love and fear cannot share the same heart. This is why when fear takes control of us, we lose our ability to show mercy to others. We can only criticize, mock and attack them.

LGBTQ as People

Here are four thoughts to encourage you, that you too may resist fear and pursue love in regard to the LGBTQ community and its new philosophy:

1) God created them.

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created Him; male and female He created them” (Gen. 1:27).

This Scripture is obviously what defines our beliefs about gender. Although we accept that our world became broken and messy because of sin, we still hold on to the truth that God’s original design was only two genders, male and female. More than that, we believe God’s glory and personality are expressed through masculinity and femininity.

But let’s start with the last three words of this verse, “He created them.” The LGBTQ people we’re talking about here are human beings, made in the image and likeness of God. They are not your political opponents. They are not “those” people. They are not monsters. They’re fallible and broken human beings, just like you and me. They’re capable of being misled and deceived, just like you and me.

With this in mind, the apostle Peter commanded us to “honor all people” (1 Pet. 2:17a). Notice “all people,” not some people—not just the ones who agree with you. All people bear the image of God. Therefore, we are called to honor them as we honor God.

Yes, some are misguided. Some even hate us. But in this, the apostle

Paul reminds us, “Our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). We must not allow ourselves to become embittered

two men in the first century to Emperor Constantine seeking the church’s blessing and declaring Christianity the formal state religion in the fourth century.

Wow! How did the church do it? Not protesting in the streets. Not posting memes on social media. Not

“When fear takes control of us, we lose our ability to show mercy to others. We can only criticize, mock and attack them.”

toward any person held captive by the evil one.

2) Remember, trans behavior is not new.

Let me echo Solomon here, “There is nothing new under the sun” (Eccl. 1:9b).

As stated earlier, LGBTQ is a belief system, a way of seeing the world, and we know misguided belief systems are not new to mankind. In fact, we humans seem to be very good at coming up with all kinds of strange beliefs about God, ourselves and the world.

We also know transgender behavior itself is not new. For thousands of years, the Indian culture has recognized a third gender, the hijra, mostly males who live as women. Ancient Roman culture was replete with homosexual and transgender behavior. In A.D. 65, the most powerful man in the world, Emperor Nero, married another man. Nero took on the “gender identity” of a woman during the ceremony. Three years later, Nero married another man, but this time, the emperor had his “bride” castrated and dressed as a woman. This new “wife” even adopted “preferred pronouns,” with the Roman court addressing him as “Lady,” “Empress” and “Mistress.”

This Roman example should give us great hope! Think about it for a second: The Roman culture goes from Emperor Nero marrying

petitioning their congressmen. Not complaining to their neighbors. Not lecturing Nero and his two husbands. No, followers of Christ changed Roman culture simply by imaging the Son of God in their daily lives and offering intercession for their fellow man. Yes, Christians conquered the Roman Empire through love.

3) Pray for freedom, not favoritism in America.

As believers, we should pray for freedom in the United States. We don’t need favoritism. Please hear this. We don’t need everyone to believe as we do. We don’t need everyone to think as we do. Why? Because the Word of God is like a lion. You don’t have to worry about protecting it. You just have to let it out of its cage, and the lion will take care of the rest. Friend, have confidence in His Word. Have confidence in His miraculous power to save and transform lives.

So, we should pray for freedom and that the rulers of our land always side with individual liberty. Pray for decisions like the recent one from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit, a federal court, which struck down Florida ordinances banning minors from seeking professional help to combat unwanted same-sex attraction or gender confusion. Minors should not be forced to take this counseling, nor should they be banned.

Let parents and their children make this decision for themselves.

We should pray according to the pattern the Lord gave us, “Our Father, who created all people, let Your name be honored. Let broken or confused people everywhere honor Your name. Give them grace, as You gave us grace. Allow them to see, as You let us see, because we know apart from You no man can see clearly.

“Let Your kingdom come and Your will be done in America, as it is in heaven. We know Your Holy Spirit is the ‘Spirit of liberty.’ We pray for all courts and branches of government in the U.S. to side with individual rights and civil liberty. We thank You for our freedoms and pray we would continue to have the freedom in America to present our spirituality to the world.”

4) Pray for our own lives.

Just as important as our prayers for the outside—maybe more important—are our prayers for our own lives. We must never forget this, because the moment we do, we become a foolish man pointing out the speck in another’s eye and blind to the log in our own.

Yes, it’s easy to mouth off to others. It’s another thing to live quiet, submissive and humble lives with good conscience before God. Do you remember what the apostles taught women married to misguided husbands? They said if any husband does not obey the Word, “they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, as they see the purity and reverence of your lives” (1 Pet. 3:1b-2).

God forbid we should talk about Him without displaying Him through our actions. For we know great judgment is reserved for anyone who tries to teach others but does not live it out themselves. So, again, let us pray according to the Lord’s pattern:

“Give us our daily bread. Meet the needs of Your servants, that we may be good, productive and helpful citizens in this country, bearing witness of the truth. Forgive us our sins and shortcomings, as we forgive

others’ shortcomings and sins. We forgive those who are blind, speak against the truth and resist Your ways, because we know we’ve done all these things. We forgive those who hate us, because You forgave us when we hated You.

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us, our children and our families from evil things and false beliefs. Keep us far from resentment and anger at those confused about their gender and even those who speak against the truth. Let us never mock or attack, but



“God forbid we should talk about Him without displaying Him through our actions.”

make us ‘wise as serpents and harmless as doves’ (Matt. 10:16b).

“Yes, allow LGBTQ people to find us harmless as doves, filled with love, kindness and a listening ear.”

How do I address a transgender person? Studies show that less than 0.6% of the population identify as

transgender. So chances are you do not know one. I actually do. As a bivocational minister, I am a technology integrator in Northeast Florida for architects and custom home builders. One of my best technicians, whom I’ll call “Joe,” is a person who was born a woman but has “transitioned” to live as a man. So how do I treat her?

Well, I know the apostles taught “if it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18). They also say, “If someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way” (1 Pet. 3:15-16a, NLT).

With these things in mind, I have chosen to use my technician’s “preferred pronouns” in daily interactions with her. I respect Joe, and I accept Joe’s choices, while at the same time, I offer a quiet and sincere testimony to Joe and the rest of my company.

I compare my approach with Joe to how I would interact with a Muslim co-worker. I’d never start the conversation, “Hey, bud. You’re wrong. Allah is not the true God, and your prophet Muhammad spoke on behalf of demons. No offense, though.” Why not? Because love is not rude, and this would just be stupid. Why would I say such careless words? These people don’t believe as I do, and why would I expect them to? I didn’t even believe as I do until the Lord opened my eyes.

I’m confident in the Lord that my advice is sound, but ultimately, I leave it to the conscience of every believer, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to help them navigate through such sticky situations. ◀

READ MORE: *For more on a charismatic perspective on gender identity, check out gender.charismamag.com.*

AJ HALL came to faith as a young club DJ through a miraculous event at his father’s deathbed in 2003. Today he is a DJ, writer and ordained minister. He is bivocational and is a technology integrator for *Luxury Architects and Home Builders* in Northeast Florida. Follow his blog at djjhall.com.

HOW I LEARNED TO FIGHT HATE WITH LOVE

In 2020, our nation descended into chaos after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. But I saw those protests as a chance to demonstrate the supernatural power of God.

BY JOSHUA LINDQUIST

The year 2020 was a challenge for many of us. At the very beginning of the year, the Holy Spirit gave me a message that I shared in Nairobi, Kenya. I preached that 2020 would be a year of unprecedented global shaking, but that this shaking would lead to unprecedented awakening and revival. I had no clue of the magnitude of both the devastation and glory that I would see unfold in 2020.

Political tensions were high early on as 2020 was an election year. Then in March, the pandemic hit the U.S. like an avalanche. Many were forced to stay at home, afraid, isolated and unable to work or pay their bills. The people were set on edge and ready to riot. Then as if things could not get any worse, more devastation hit as George Floyd was suffocated to death by a police officer, and many around the world watched it through a viral video.

This was the breaking moment. Many decided to get out of their home lockdowns and express their rage. For some, it was the deep unhealed pain of racial injustice, for others, the anger of the lockdowns and for still others, an excuse to go outside and release the anarchy within. To say the least, a great shaking hit America, and our cities were aflame with chaos.

Coming Out of Hiding

When this all went down, I was away from home, praying in the Washington, D.C., area. Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, 15 minutes from my house in St. Paul, Minnesota. I watched live videos of my neighborhood being set on fire, mobs destroying buildings I often entered. My neighborhood became a war zone. Martial law was on the verge of breaking out with Army vehicles, helicopters swarming and curfews in place. Anger, hurt and chaos filled the streets as buildings burned to the ground. I asked myself, “Where is the church in all of this?”

As a global missionary with a passion for revival, I usually travel to more than 10 nations a year. I was scheduled to go to Portugal, and everything in my flesh wanted to go there because it is easy, beautiful and filled with kind people, but the Holy Spirit began to grip my heart for my home state. I thought, *How can I go to the nations right now when my very own neighborhood is on fire with riots and mayhem?* At the same time, I felt what many were feeling: hurt, confusion and fear. I really didn’t want to go back home to the war zone, but I also didn’t want to disobey the Holy Spirit. I was wrestling with God.

continued »



JOSHUA LINDQUIST



The gospel is preached at the George Floyd memorial in Minneapolis.

I asked God, “What do You want me to do?” As a white man in the wake of an injustice done to a Black man, I felt useless. But I felt as though the Holy Spirit said, “Love, serve and use your gift to unite people to see revival. Call the church out of hiding and into the frontlines of the battle like Gideon in Judges 6.”

So I asked God for a sign to confirm that I should go back home. The Spirit told me a friend named J.T. Thomas would be coming to Minneapolis, and I needed to assist him. Thomas is a powerful Black preacher who saw the riots

confusion and anger. The spiritual climate was intense.

Local and national ministries were already there on the ground, reaching out to people. God had found a group of warriors with courage who were not afraid of the frontlines of battle, and He was about to unite and use them mightily to turn the story around and help this bleeding community heal.

Confessing Christ in Baptism

One particular church, located on the same street as the George Floyd memorial site, had served there faithfully for 39 years. They graciously

“People from every background—atheists, anarchists, Muslims and many ethnicities—put their hands in the air to receive Jesus.”



The multicultural church displays prayerful unity at the Kenosha, Wisconsin, protest site.

of Ferguson, Missouri, turn into a revival that brought healing and racial reconciliation in the aftermath of the 2014 police-involved shooting of Michael Brown. Just as I was praying about Thomas coming to Minneapolis, he called me and said he felt led to come and asked if I could assist him. That was my confirmation. I knew for sure God was calling me to go back home into the war zone. So I booked my ticket and landed in the chaos to assist Thomas. We then went to the George Floyd memorial, which was filled at that moment with

allowed us to set up a stage in front of their building, which was very close to where Floyd was killed. The team asked if I wanted to preach, but I said no because I wanted to let the Black brothers and sisters take the stage due to the racial sensitivity of the memorial. I was content with serving and helping see all the ministry pieces come together.

People were pouring into the Floyd memorial at that point from all over the world. It was a place of mourning. Each night brought a fresh crowd, mainly of unbelievers searching for answers.

I'll never forget the first night. More than 1,000 people were at the memorial site. Worship filled the atmosphere, and the gospel was proclaimed by a team of Black preachers. Hundreds of hands went up to receive Jesus. People from every background—atheists, anarchists, Muslims and many ethnicities—put their hands in the air to receive Jesus. Many were weeping and getting hit by the power and love of God. Deliverance was taking place as the team of many believers went in the crowd praying for those who were open to it. Hearts were being healed of



Baptisms were performed in the back of a pickup truck at the Chicago street revival.

tremendous pain and confusion. This was a huge breakthrough moment for the revival that was building at the George Floyd memorial.

At that point, we did not have a baptismal on site. With permission of the pastor who had allowed us to set up our stage in front of his church, I was able to get a baptismal set up right next to the stage.

The next night a Black sister from a ministry called Circuit Riders preached the gospel powerfully, and many gave their lives to Jesus. But this time, they invited people to be baptized!

During my time at the George Floyd memorial, I posted a number of Facebook Live videos to document what God was doing in an attempt to capture good news in the midst of this tragedy that had left so many hearts hopeless. The live video of the baptisms went viral around the world, giving hope to many who were looking for

something positive to come out of the woes of 2020.

We found out that before George Floyd died, he helped his pastors carry a baptismal into the streets for people to be baptized. I thought, *What better way to honor this man than to see baptisms happen at his memorial!*

Fighting With Forgiveness

As things were going viral and momentum was building, the church was coming together in unprecedented unity to see ashes turn to beauty. There really wasn't any one superhero who made this revival happen. Rather, many members of the body of Christ prayed, gave food, served and stepped up to love this hurting community and preach Good News in the midst of the continual bad news that was suffocating hope from our land.

Thomas and some of the national

ministers who came into town had to leave, and they asked me who we should have led the revival. I did not want to lead it publicly because I'm a white guy. But I told them to look no further than my dear friend Dr. Charles Karuku and his wife, Lindsey. They had been there from the beginning, praying, preaching, serving and plowing the ground. Yes, I am a revival preacher, but I was content to help behind the scenes to see the body of Christ come together.

So Charles and Lindsey took the public lead of the revival meetings at the George Floyd memorial, which lasted for about 60 days straight. Charles is Black, and Lindsey is a white woman who grew up in Iowa. The couple tag-teamed, preaching a message of racial reconciliation and forgiveness. Almost every night at the memorial, you would see people of every color in each other's arms, crying

uncontrollably and forgiving each other of racism and division. The gospel was bringing much-needed healing to a bleeding community searching for answers. The main message preached repeatedly was the cross: “Be reconciled with God through Jesus vertically and receive God’s grace to forgive and reconcile with one another horizontally.”

Many ministries and members of the body of Christ from various denominations came together to keep this revival going. I could write books about the supernatural unity and miracles I saw at the George Floyd memorial revival. Thousands heard the gospel, hundreds gave their lives to Jesus, dozens were baptized. Demons came out of many, and people were set free of drug abuse, depression, hopelessness and suicidal thoughts. The gifts of the Spirit were in full operation through diverse parts of the body of Christ. Many testified to receiving miracles, and people came from all over the nation to serve, love and give. Racial reconciliation happened, and the riots in Minneapolis subsided.

At the same time, the environment was not without persecution and danger. I had death threats on my life, and our team was continually slandered with false accusations and threatened by gangs. But it was worth it all!

Seeing Revival on the Streets

Overall, the pain of what happened from George Floyd’s death went around the world. But the church stepped into the scene and brought beauty from ashes. The testimony of the revival that took place at his memorial went around the world as well. Bad news was turned to good, and hope was released. Inspired by our example, people in other states and even nations began to preach the gospel in public, baptize and engage in racial reconciliation.

One example of this took place in Kenosha, Wisconsin. In August, I had a good friend from Wisconsin at my house, and I was telling him about all God was doing at the memorial revival. While my friend was on his

“A new season of revival has been birthed on the streets of America, and I feel it is just the beginning of what’s coming!”

way home, Jacob Blake was shot, and riots broke out. My friend lives 15 minutes from Kenosha, and his neighborhood became like my neighborhood, a burning war zone overnight! He asked me what to do. I told him to pray and begin to unite the church in the area. I talked to local pastors and to the team I was working with at the George Floyd memorial, and we decided to go to Kenosha and hold a revival meeting right where the protests were happening.

In Kenosha, the multiracial church united and gathered for prayer. The gospel was preached with power and love. Angry rioters got hit with the Holy Spirit and were delivered. The love and power of God changed hearts full of anger, bitterness and hatred. Many were baptized, and from that night, the Kenosha riots stopped. Coincidence?—I think not!

Another testimony many have heard was from a well-known missionary worship leader, Sean Feucht. He came to the George Floyd memorial and witnessed the move of God there. He told our team it was one of the strongest revivals he had ever seen in the U.S. He was very encouraged and believed God wanted to move across America in the midst of all the shakings.

Inspired, Feucht went home to California and started a revival that would go far beyond what we saw at the George Floyd memorial. His inspiration became a tour of 48 cities being rocked by the gospel. I went on this tour and witnessed tens of thousands gather, thousands receive Jesus and thousands get baptized publicly—in America! I witnessed people who were suicidal and depressed from the coronavirus lockdowns run to the altar, receive Christ and get set free. I witnessed

anarchists, prostitutes and satanists give their lives to Jesus. In Nashville, Tennessee, alone, around 500 people were baptized in one night. In one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in Chicago, we baptized so many people in the back of a truck that I lost count.

These are just a few testimonies, but a new season of revival has been birthed on the streets of America, and I feel it is just the beginning of what’s coming.

As we see these global last-days shakings continue, I believe we will see an even greater last-days awakening and harvest of souls. COVID-19 gave us one blessing in that it pushed the church out of the building. In the midst of the chaos of the hour we live in, I believe we are going to see powerful revivals break out on the streets once again like what happened with Jesus in the Gospels and with the disciples in Acts.

Church, we need to be ready. More shakings are coming! When crisis hits, we need to refuse the temptation to hide and, instead, run to the battlefield, unite with other believers, love people and preach the gospel with boldness and power.

You don’t need to be a superstar to see revival touch your city. You just need to be obedient to the Holy Spirit, and God will be with you every step of the way.

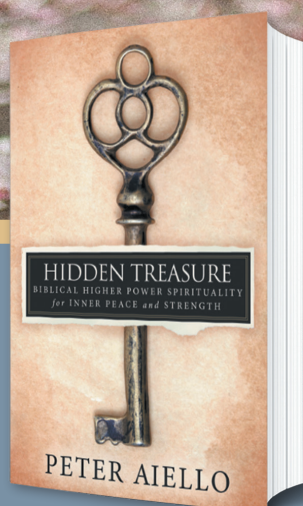
My prayer is that this testimony of riots turning to revival will inspire you and that it will repeat itself many times over for the glory of God. Amen. ◀

READ MORE: *To learn more about racism in American culture and the church’s response, visit racism.charismamag.com.*

JOSHUA LINDQUIST is a Spirit-filled evangelist who lives in Minneapolis.

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HOLY SPIRIT



Just a few miles from the nation's capital, a young couple with roots in Ethiopia is building a vibrant church that touches the city.

BY ANAHID SCHWEIKERT

It happened on a park bench, the same bench on the outskirts of Washington, D.C., where the homeless man occasionally made his bed. Andy Galatis' childhood was so sweet when he lived comfortably with his family on the island nation of Mauritius, but later, as a young immigrant to the U.S., he fell into a world of crime and addiction. Now, with ruined relationships, no job and nowhere to go, he was drowning in despair, thinking God had given up on him. "Is this how my story ends?" he cried out.

Moments later, a man with a familiar face approached from a distance. Paul Hanfere had been a friend of his during their teenage years, and they'd attended youth group together at International Ethiopian Evangelical Church in the nation's capital where Paul's father was the lead pastor. Even though Galatis' own dad was also on the pastoral staff, the two friends hadn't been in touch for over 20 years.

"Andy, is that you?" Paul asked.

Tears flooded the distraught man's face as he cried out for help. It was a divine appointment. Paul had no idea he would cross paths with his old friend. He listened to Galatis' story, gave him a place to stay that night and invited him to come back to church where

Paul was by then serving as the young adult pastor.

Discipleship and restoration followed over the next year. Like the New Testament story of Jesus and the woman at the well in John 4, the encounter at the park bench was a drink of living water.

"That moment, indeed, changed my life forever," Galatis says. "I was able to encounter God and discover my purpose."

Living a new life, Galatis is now pursuing a college degree and serving on the media team at a new church co-founded by Paul and his wife, Christina.

Welcome One and All

Overflow City Church is a multiethnic congregation in Silver Spring, Maryland, that has seen nearly 300 decisions for Christ since its launch in 2018. Co-pastors Paul and Christina are both Ethiopian, and although the congregation is more than half Ethiopian, it's culturally a Western-style, English-speaking church that is growing in diversity.

"We try to represent the community that it's in," Paul says. "We want to create a ... centralized worship experience that's welcoming for everyone, no matter where you're from."

OVERFLOW IN WASHINGTON



Zema Meseretu, left, worships with others attending a 2019 Sunday morning service at Overflow City Church in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Encountering Jesus Christ is a work of the Holy Spirit, but it's not the same for everyone.

"It can be an emotion, but not always," Paul says. "It's engaging with God in a way that's tangible."

Whether that's in a worship service or through a healing or an answered prayer, or even a gradual realization of faith, it's transformational.

While Overflow attracts a high percentage of professionals, its food distribution outreaches connected with Montgomery County and Blessings of Hope enable the church to minister to people from all walks of life.

"You could have a high-powered attorney sitting next to a homeless person who pushes a cart," Paul says about the Sunday services. And just outside the theater where the church meets, you would find a Hare Krishna band, a Jehovah Witness booth and people of other faiths seeking converts.

Go Deep With God

Overflow's mission isn't unlike other churches—leading people to Christ and helping them find their God-given purpose. But its focus on discipleship is key to the personal and corporate inner growth the church is seeing.

"Our desire is not to be a church that's a mile wide and an inch deep," Paul says. "We put a high premium on investing in people in a discipleship and spiritual growth manner."

New believers and others who are involved in small groups find biblical teaching, prayer support and a sense of belonging. As people are spending more time alone, many are examining their lives and their faith, Paul says.

"They're a lot more open to going deeper with God and receiving healing and wholeness in their hearts," he says.

Last October, 20 people who were ready to take their faith journey to the next level were baptized outdoors.

"We've been experiencing major traction and engagement from virtual Life Groups," Paul says. "The hunger for God is what amazes me."

Trudy Kaham discovered Overflow City Church after receiving a flyer in the mail. She had been looking for a church family in 2018 after moving to Silver Spring and found her home there after just one visit.

"I could feel the genuineness and the Spirit of the Lord, that feeling I had been longing [for]," Kaham says.

A year later, she was devastated when her grandmother, who had raised her, died. Although she was a new member of the church's First Impressions team, Kaham was comforted

The international congregation sings and prays together at a pre-pandemic church service at Overflow City Church.



by the church's support during her time of grief.

"They barely knew me, but I was family, and they made sure I knew they were there for me," she says.

Planting a new church comes with challenges, but nurturing one in the throes of a pandemic, along with the exploding political unrest and racial tensions the U.S. has recently experienced, has cast a heavenly light on the basics of the gospel.

"Relationship is huge, huge, huge, huge," Paul says. "[Last] summer has called us to rise up and provide safe places [for people] to dialogue and share and vent their emotions. We have been called to be a bridge builder."

The church's response, say the Hanferes, is to face the issues head-on.

"Give it the major real estate on Sundays," Paul says. "Bring in some folks who don't look like the majority of your congregation to speak into the life of the church."

They also engage people virtually via Zoom by encouraging honest discussions about racism and how prejudice impacts people's hearts.

"It's the stories that bring empathy in others," Paul says.

"We put a high premium on investing in people in a discipleship and spiritual growth manner." —Paul Hanfer

Christina was born and raised in Greece and later lived in Canada. She said the racial turmoil in the U.S. was a culture shock when she arrived four years ago.

"The first few months were hardest, trying to grasp the history of it all," Christina says. "...This is a deeply rooted sin issue. We need to go back to understand the heart of the gospel. All people are made in the image of God."

Move in the Supernatural

Christina's training began at Ethiopian Evangelical Church in Toronto.

"I learned a lot through highly disciplined involvement in the church," she says.

Christina received a prophetic word at 13 saying she would someday lead a multiethnic congregation. Currently

pursuing a pastoral ministry degree through Oral Roberts University, she shares the preaching/teaching responsibilities and oversees the discipleship element of the church and worship team. Her role has been welcomed and encouraged, she says.

In contrast, Paul never planned to be in ministry. Although he grew up as a pastor's kid, he says he never had a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ until his late 20s. After high school, he moved away to attend college and then began a career in finance and technology. But later, as God began to reorder his spiritual life, he felt led to seek out ministry training, thinking he might use it alongside his career path. But in 2014, while attending Global Awakening Ministry School in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, Paul was overcome by a deep compassion

for the lost and sensed the call to become a pastor.

For three years, he trained and traveled with the school's founder, Randy Clark, having witnessed the Holy Spirit's touch in supernatural ways.

"It was a constant, regular occurrence where you would see healings and impartations, seeing people baptized with the Holy Spirit with power, and words of knowledge," Paul says.

Clark, an internationally known revivalist and author, says he chose Paul to be an intern with his ministry because of his stellar ability, intellect, commitment, wisdom and anointing.

"I consider him a spiritual son of whom I am very proud," Clark told *Charisma*. "I watched him grow in his faith for the miraculous. We had many discussions about church planting and church growth in addition to moving in the supernatural. God has brought him an amazing wife, and together,

Paul and Christina make a super couple for the kingdom of God."

Paul says he looks forward to opportunities to pray for people without the constraints of a rented facility or virtual services.

"The church dynamic is different now," he says. "[The challenge is] how to create a space where people can go further in prophetic ministry."

Overflow is affiliated with the Assemblies of God and is an extension

"Paul and Christina make a super couple for the kingdom of God." -Randy Clark



Pastors Christina and Paul Hanfere are known as exceptional leaders inside and outside the church.

of Oaks Church in Red Oaks, Texas. The young D.C. church was the 500th plant in coordination with the AG Trust and Church Multiplication Network, which provides training, initial funding and ongoing accountability to new churches.

Oaks Church Pastor Chris Railey has mentored the Hanferes for three years.

"The metro D.C. area is a seat of influence for our nation and the world," Railey says. "To bring the hope and transformation of the gospel to this place is an opportunity for that ... to be multiplied far and wide."

Their fit for this assignment from God is evident in their attitude toward recent political happenings in Washington.

"The recent events that we have witnessed unfolding in the nation's capital are a jarring reminder of the great threat this country's peace and unity are facing," they say. "In distressed times such as these, it has become abundantly clear that the church faces a great urgency of fulfilling the call of being the agents of unity, of healing, of compassion and of light. This will not be done by fighting over or choosing political sides. Rather, by remembering who we belong to and whose kingdom we have been called to represent here on earth. We need to hold fast to the reminder that the health, stability and well being of our nation depend on our prayers, and on our willingness to demonstrate the heart and attitude of Christ through our actions and speech."

Railey believes the Hanferes are uniquely called and equipped to bring the gospel to their strategic area. He says Paul and Christina are "two of the best leaders I know anywhere, and [they] know how to lead and love, both inside and outside of the church." ◀

READ MORE: To learn more about what God is doing in churches across the globe, visit church.charismamag.com.

ANAHD SCHWEIKERT is a freelance writer who lives in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Revitalize the Family

Make God the center of your life, marriage and family to help restore a world gone mad

BY MICHAEL YOUSSEF

Christians often quote the words of Psalm 127:3 (NLT), which says, “Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.” That is a blessed truth, and every believing parent knows it. But when we quote this verse out of context, we miss out on a deeper truth embedded in these words.

The author of Psalm 127 is King Solomon, the son of David. Before Solomon could say that children are an inheritance from the Lord, he had first to lay the foundation for that statement, which he does in verses 1-2 (NIV): “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves.”

Before we can say that children are an inheritance from the Lord, the Lord must build the house. It is the Lord who must build our families.

Psalm 127 is beautifully expressive Hebrew poetry. But beneath this psalm’s graceful words is an indictment, a rebuke to the lifestyle of many 21st-century Christians. This psalm condemns our divided allegiances and the lack of wholeness and integration in our lives.

Solomon is saying that if you leave God out of your life and out of your family’s life, it is useless to work hard to provide for the material needs of your family. You might work 80 hours a week so you can afford a huge mansion, the best food, the finest clothing and the most prestigious schools for your children—and it would all be for nothing if you failed to make God the foundation of your family life.

If you leave God out of your family’s life, all the material blessings you provide will ruin your children’s lives. Instead of being grateful to God for His provision, they’ll grow up feeling arrogant and entitled. If God is not the center of your family life, the inheritance you leave your children will be a curse, not a blessing. “In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat.” Solomon says in verse 2, “for he grants sleep to those he loves.”

The Old Testament was not written for a Western mindset but an Eastern mindset. The Western mindset divides life into distinct categories. Westerners place “family” in a different category from “work.” We maintain separate categories in every aspect of our lives. We separate the spiritual from the temporal, the home from the workplace, Sunday from the other weekdays—and we behave like different people when we are in these other environments.

People who meet us only in the workplace might not recognize us if they saw us at home. People who meet us only at church might not recognize the way we behave at the office. People who know our weekday selves might not recognize our Sunday selves and vice versa.

But the Bible tells us that those who fear God, love God and serve God must live an



JESSICA ROCKWITZ/JUNSPASH



**“If God is not
the center of your
family life, the
inheritance you
leave your children
will be a curse, not
a blessing.”**

integrated life. The word “integrated” means “with all parts seamlessly conjoined and coordinated.” It comes from the same Latin root word as integrity—the Latin word *integer*, meaning “whole.” If we have integrity, if our lives are fully integrated, then we are whole—there are no compartments in our lives. All aspects of our lives fit together perfectly and seamlessly.

God at the Center

An old African proverb says that it takes a village to raise a child. The modern-day “village” in this proverb is all society, including schools, houses of worship, doctors and businesses, but most of all, government programs. Some have used this idea to advocate for various laws, regulations, welfare state programs and taxpayer support of “family planning” organizations such as Planned Parenthood.

I submit that it does not take a village to raise a child. God already designed the perfect nurturing environment for a child. It’s called a family. It is pointless to talk about caring for the needs of children while we do nothing to strengthen the family. Children don’t need all this meddling by the “village.” Children need the family. We need to teach parents how to be parents and how to build healthy families. That means we need to teach moms and dads how to put God at the center of their families.

The “village” that surrounds our families today is a godless village. Prayer has been banned from schools, so the schools cannot help families put God at the center. Welfare state programs cannot help families put God at the center. Planned Parenthood is certainly not going to help families put God at the center. Doctors and businesses are not equipped to help families put God at the center. So the “village” is essentially godless and useless. A godless village can only produce godless children.

From where do godly children come? Only one place: godly families.

The psalmist tells us that unless God is at the center of the family, the family is adrift. Unless God is at the center of our family life, our

children will be unsafe, insecure and in danger. But when we place God at the center of our family, we will see four wonderful results.

Result No. 1: When God is at the center of the family, He will grow the family.

When God builds the house, when God is at the center of the home, the family will grow in faith, character and maturity. When God’s Word fills a home with His wisdom, the insignia of spiritual maturity is imprinted on the souls of each family member. When God’s presence permeates the family, there is harmony and peace throughout the household. When the family seeks the mind of God in every important decision, that home becomes a testament to God’s grace.

My family could tell you that I have my share of flaws, and I make my fair share of mistakes. I don’t say that to appear humble. I am deeply flawed as a Christian, as a husband and as a father. But as God knows my heart, I can tell you that I honestly seek to put Jesus Christ at the center of our home. His grace has overruled so many of my mistakes. His forgiveness has compensated for my times of impatience and overreaction. His wisdom has corrected my moments of foolishness. I can honestly say that it would have been impossible for my family to grow to a place of Christian maturity if my wife and I had not been daily on our knees, pleading with God on behalf of our family.

It is impossible to raise a family for Christ in this corrosive and anti-Christian culture without hours and hours of prayer. It is impossible to raise a family for Christ in our own flawed and sinful flesh. Only complete reliance on God can enable us to raise our children in the fear and nurture of the Lord.

Result No. 2: When God is at the center of the family, He will bless the family.

Across our culture, families are disintegrating. Children are neglected. Parents are raising their children out of guilt, not love. They give them



everything in the world except the most important thing of all—time spent together in prayer and the Word of God.

A well-known Christian leader once told me that before he became a Christian, he viewed his family as a nuisance. They took up his time and got in the way of his ambition for success. He didn’t enjoy playing with his kids, talking with his kids or spending time with his kids. He couldn’t wait to leave town on a business trip because all he cared about was worldly success. Once he became a Christian, his priorities changed. Suddenly, he wanted to spend time with his kids, talking with them about Jesus and how God had blessed their family, memorizing Scripture with them, praying with them, playing with them, listening to them.

Once this man put God at the center of his life and his family, God blessed his family and blessed his life. Most importantly, this man began to see his children as a blessing and an inheritance from the Lord.



“The story of God’s parenting of Israel in the Old Testament and His parenting of the church in the New Testament is the best parenting class you could ever take.”

Solomon is saying to us today that children who are blessed—and children who are a blessing—are brought up to know the Lord. Only when we raise children to love God, to honor their father and mother, and to obey God’s Word, are they blessed to be a blessing to others.

Result No. 3: When God is at the center of the family, He will guide the family.

Children who observe their parents regularly studying the Word of

God for the direction in their lives will grow up seeking guidance from the Word. The habit of seeking direction from the Word is usually caught, not taught. As parents, we impart this habit more by setting an example than by preaching to our children.

How do we find guidance from God’s Word? Well, some read God’s Word as if it were a fortune cookie. They close their eyes, poke their finger at a random page of the Bible, then read what is written.

I once heard about a man who

tried this method of seeking guidance from the Bible. He closed his eyes, poked his finger at a verse and opened his eyes to read Matthew 27:5b, which says, “he went away and hanged himself.” Well, that wasn’t what he wanted to hear! He tried again, and this time he chanced upon Luke 10:37b, where he read, “Go and do likewise.” That was worse! So he tried again and read these words from John 13:27: “What you are about to do, do quickly.”

We cannot know the mind of God by randomly selecting bits and pieces of His Word. To find guidance for our daily lives, we need to be daily, regularly, habitually feeding on the Word of God. We need to systematically build God’s wisdom into our lives so that, when a crisis comes, when it’s time to make a difficult decision, we will already have God’s answer waiting for us in our hearts.

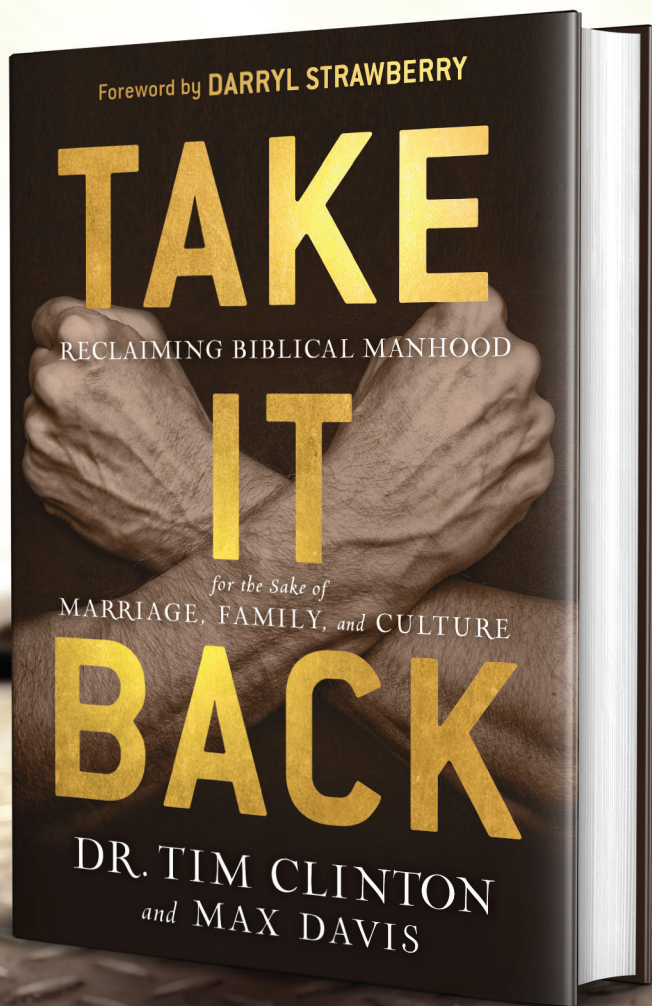
One of the ways we become wiser, more godly parents is by studying the way God, our heavenly Father, parents us. One of the most profound experiences of Christian parenthood is learning to appreciate God’s fatherly love for us. As we go through various joys and trials with our children, we realize again and again, “Oh, that’s how God rejoices with me; that’s how God is patient with me; that’s how God is loving and forgiving with me!”

How can we become the best parents we can be? It’s simple. All we have to do is copy the model of God the Father. Study the fatherhood of God, then do as He does. The story of God’s parenting of Israel in the Old Testament and His parenting of the church in the New Testament is the best parenting class you could ever take. Here are some examples.

» In Genesis 28:15, God says, “I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go. ... I will not leave you.” A godly parent is always available, protective and involved in the child’s life.

» In Deuteronomy 20:4, we read, “For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.” A

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godly parent is always rooting for the child and giving leadership to the child so that he or she can live victoriously.

» In Psalm 149:4a, God says, “For the Lord takes delight in his people.” A godly parent enjoys being with the child and takes delight in the child. A godly parent lifts up the child and never tears down the child.

» In Jeremiah 31:34b, God says, “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” A godly parent forgives and forgets. A godly parent does not bring up past sins against the child but forgives as if they never happened.

» In Psalm 34:15, God says, “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry.” God listens to us. He doesn’t merely pretend to listen as human parents all too often do. He is attentive to our prayers, our pleadings and our cries. Godly parents are good listeners. Are we as attentive to our children as God is to us?

» In 1 John 3:1a, we read, “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” Godly parents lavish love on their children. They are quick to tell their children, “I am so proud of you! I love you so much!”

As we grow in our understanding of God’s parenting of us, we gain parenting wisdom directly from God. We will never achieve God-like perfection as parents, but we will have the best guidance a parent could have. Our children will still have problems and issues; they may question our teaching for a time as they seek their own identity. But they will grow up to love the Lord because we have modeled God’s love to them.

Result No. 4: When God is at the center of the family, He will protect the family.

We live in a dangerous world with bullying and violence in schools, mind-altering drugs in the streets and predators on the internet and in our neighborhoods. Real dangers are facing our kids and surrounding our families. That’s why the psalmist said, “Unless the Lord watches over the

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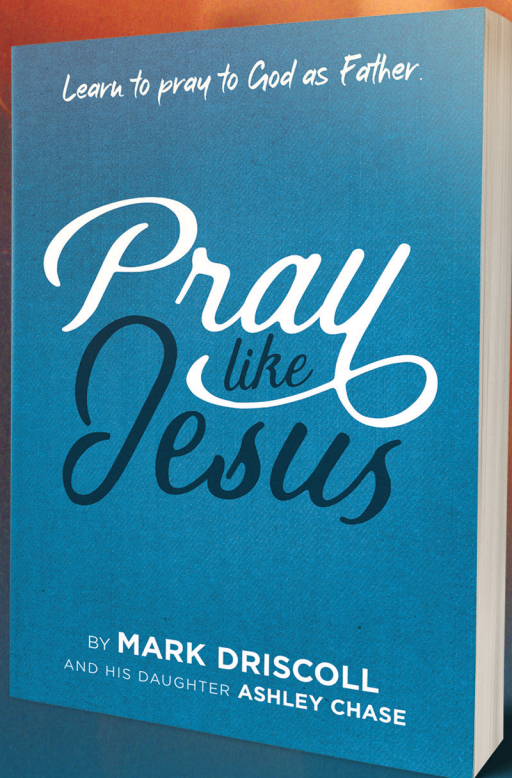
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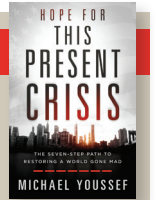


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MORE INFORMATION

In this book, Dr. Youssef diagnoses the current culture's insanity and offers a seven-step prescription for hope and healing.



city, the guards stand watch in vain” (Ps. 127:1b). Let’s put those words in today’s terms: “Unless God is the protector and defender of our families and communities, the police and first responders can do little to save us.”

I thank God for police officers and firefighters and emergency medical workers and the military—all the brave protectors of our families and communities. Now and then, we see an officer killed in the line of duty—and I’m not ashamed to say that I weep when I see such stories in the news. I think of the terrible grief and sadness when a family learns that Dad or Mom won’t be coming home from pursuing a suspect or fighting a fire.

But I want to tell you that we have an even greater guardian than the police or the fire department. That guardian’s name is Jesus. He sends His angels to minister to our families. Unless He is watching over us, all other guardians are in vain.

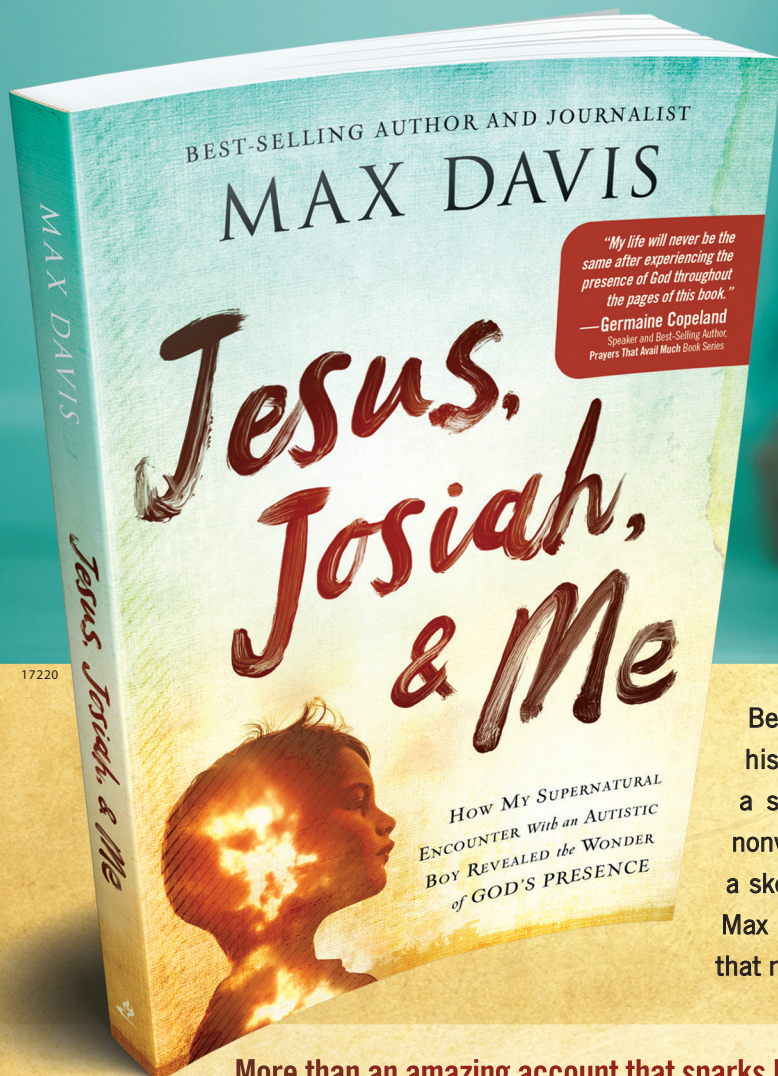
The psalmist says it is in vain for the guards to watch over the city unless God Himself guards it. The Lord will protect those who place God at the center of their families. Those who place God at the center of their families will find shelter under His wings. Those who place God at the center of their families are engraved on the palms of His hand. You have His word on it.

When God is at the center, God grows the family, God blesses the family, God guides the family, and God protects the family. To revitalize your family, place God at the center of your life, your marriage and your family. ◀

MICHAEL YOUSSEF, PH.D., *founded The Church of The Apostles, which was the launching pad for Leading The Way’s international ministry. He has written more than 30 books, including Jesus, Jihad and Peace and When the Crosses Are Gone.*

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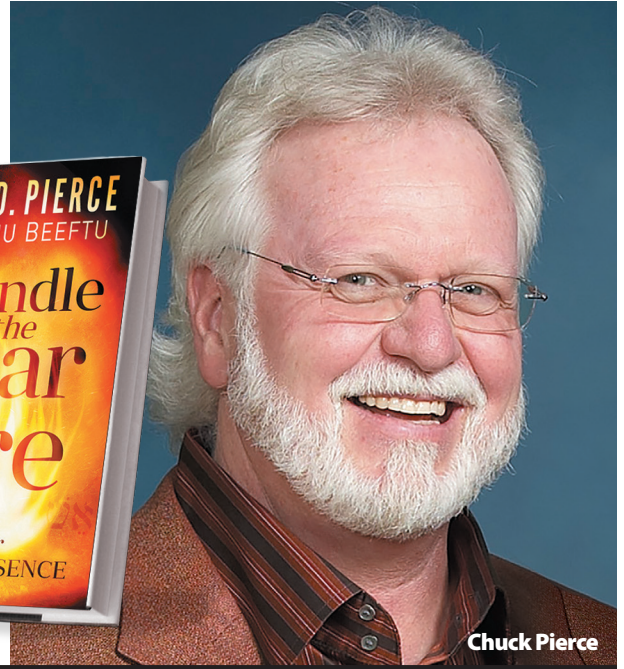
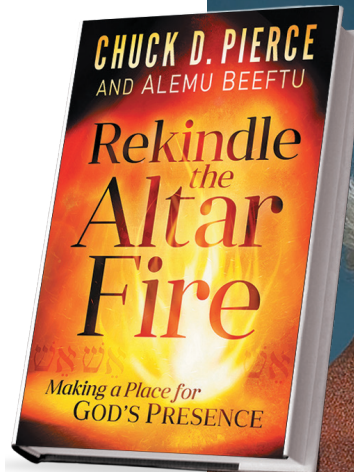
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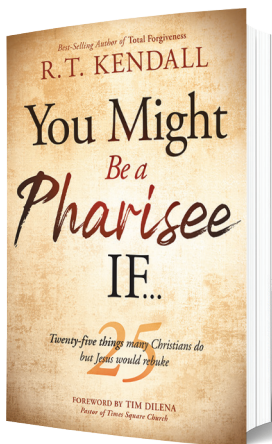
Compiled by Nadia Joy Schult

Rekindle the Altar Fire Chuck Pierce and Alemu Beeftu Chosen/Baker Publishing Group

Gone are the days when believers show their faith through sacrifice on altars. And yet modern followers of Jesus must return to this biblical principle to restore their hearts as a place of worship and sacrifice. Chuck Pierce and Alemu Beeftu's *Rekindle the Altar Fire* is a call for those looking for a fresh awakening to cultivate space for the fire of the Holy Spirit to fall afresh, renewing hearts, spirits and minds.

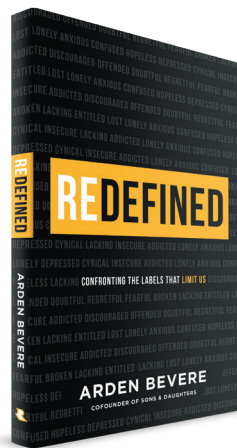


Chuck Pierce



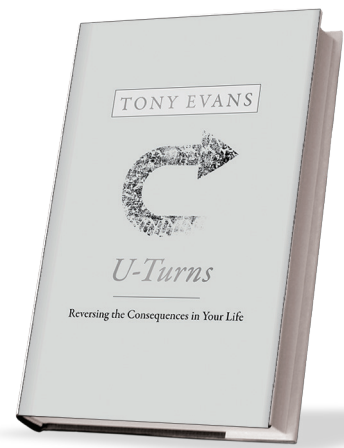
You Might Be a Pharisee If... R.T. Kendall Charisma House

Jesus called out the religious spirits of the Pharisees, striking down their pretentious ways and superior thinking. Now, *You Might Be a Pharisee If...* asks questions of those who need to find release from self-righteousness and legalism. By recognizing the warning signs, author R.T. Kendall presents a view of a life so set free.



Redefined Arden Bevere Revell/Baker Publishing Group

Arden Bevere's heart for challenging generations to do better than those who came before is apparent in *Redefined*—a book encouraging Millennials and others to find their identity in Christ and impact their spheres of influence. The book helps believers find freedom in who and what God says they are.



U-Turns Tony Evans B&H Books

The third in the series on finding freedom and life abundant, Pastor Tony Evans' *U-Turns* offers readers a perspective change, one that sees trials as opportunities for God's glory and our good. Written in the turmoil of 2020 and in the wake of contested elections, *U-Turns* calls the church to do a 180 in the way it influences culture.

PODCAST



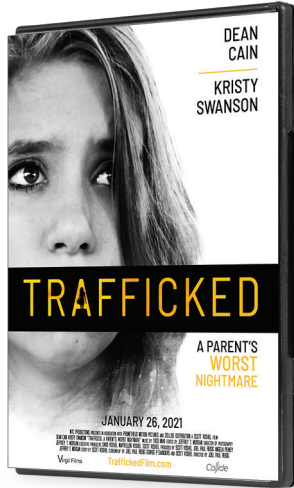
Listen to **Shawn Bolz** interview inspiring Christians from different industries on how God's voice changed their world.

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Imago Amor
Remedy Drive
Independent

Imago Amor is part commentary on modern-day slavery and part initiative to end human trafficking. This third in a musical series from Remedy Drive is influenced by the group's work with The Exodus Road to shine light on the nonprofit's dedication to rescuing trafficking victims. The 10-song album centers on its title's theme, "the image of love" and how it relates to following the biblical command to love the least of these.



Trafficked: A Parent's Worst Nightmare
Virgil Films & Entertainment

With its release in January, Sex Trafficking Awareness Month, *Trafficked: A Parent's Worst Nightmare* allows viewers a glimpse into what families go through when trafficking affects them. Based on stories of faith and family, the film shows how sex traffickers use online dating to lure unsuspecting victims and the lengths loved ones must go to set them free. *Trafficked* echoes the devastation over 20 million families a year suffer.

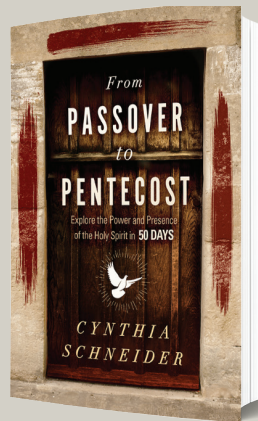


Not Holding Back
JJ Hairston
eOne/JamesTown Music

The newest album from Billboard Music's No. 11 Gospel Artist of the Decade, *Not Holding Back*, encourages listeners with hope, healing and inspiration in times of turmoil. Empowered to complete the assignment the Lord has given him, Hairston recognizes this album as the "corporate worship" many were missing in 2020. When everything is turned upside down, Hairston hopes this music will speak life and joy to listeners' hearts.

From Passover to Pentecost
Cynthia Schneider
Charisma House

The 50-day period between the cross and the Holy Spirit's arrival in the upper room is often overlooked. Cynthia Schneider examines this time and equips believers with the tools to go deeper in their relationship with the Spirit, who is ever ready to impart His power to us.



Cynthia Schneider

Don't Lose Hope

Cochren & Co.
Gotee

Finding value in the journey and seeing God's work in each phase of life are themes on Cochren & Co.'s *Don't Lose Hope*. Without sidestepping life's harsh realities, this album soars with notes of light and encouragement. The flow from upbeat gospel radio hits to songs of quiet strength highlights Michael Cochren's vocal range and takes listeners on a journey most evident on the narrative track "Waiting for This Moment."

Triumphant songs at the start include "For My Good" and "He's Not Here," reminding weary believers of carefree days and offering hope. This concept is revisited in "Young" and "Whole World," after the album settles into the simplicity of "Don't Lose Hope," "Who Can" and "One Day."

Don't Lose Hope ends with the highest of crescendos, both musically and metaphorically, with "Stained Glass Window" and "Grave." The former stands out as the song in which Cochren hits his stride. On the latter, his delivery is completely unhindered. The if-then statements on "Grave" challenge listeners: "If there hadn't been a Savior that died to make a way/ I'd still be a dead man, if there hadn't been a grave."



Michael Cochren

With both radio hits and soulful melodies, Cochren & Co.'s *Don't Lose Hope* offers a new outlook on the relationship of joy and heartache. —Nadia Joy Schult

That Sounds Fun

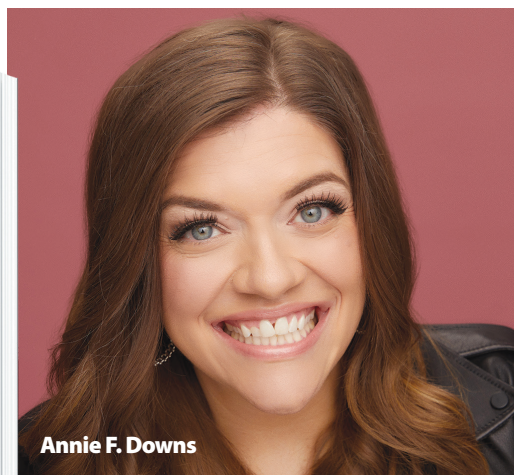
Annie F. Downs
Revell/Baker Publishing Group

As a joy-filled woman of faith, author, speaker and podcaster Annie F. Downs believes we all need to have fun. Her book, with the same title as her popular podcast, offers practical ways to live the abundant life. Downs' witty humor and tragically hilarious stories are sprinkled throughout the book's touching anecdotes.

Readers will understand that perfection, as God intended it, is lost, but He still gives us glimpses of Eden. Downs also believes the Lord calls us to revel in His joy so we can encourage others. For those who are lonely or who wonder *Is there more?*, this delightful book allows readers to dream of ways they can return to a fun-filled life, even amid trials.

Perhaps the book's most poignant section is unexpected, highlighting one small way to regain a sense of Eden: enjoying hobbies.

Downs helps readers feel as though they are sitting across a coffee



Annie F. Downs

shop table with their best friend. Here, she talks about how this generation is the "hungeriest" she's seen, but they must not miss that God is working to reveal more of Himself to them. Overall, readers will find *That Sounds Fun* "endearing yet powerful." —Nadia Joy Schult

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God Has Plans and Purposes We Don't Understand

My personal response to President Joe Biden's election and steps ahead in our coverage

As you probably know, I've not only written four books about former President Donald Trump, but I've also been an unabashed Trump supporter for several years. Now that President Joe Biden has been inaugurated, I want to share my personal thoughts on the prophecies about President Trump and how Charisma Media will cover this going forward.

My first book, *God and Donald Trump*, was really about his miraculous win and how different Christian leaders, many of whom I know personally and had written about in *Charisma*, had said God had raised up this very unlikely leader. If you've read the book, you know I attended the victory party in New York City the night of the 2016 election. And even though in the natural, everybody said Trump would never win, I just thought, *Well, the prophets prophesied*. I believed he would do it, and he was elected.

God and Donald Trump may even be the best of my four books. It was successful enough that I wrote a sequel, *Trump Aftershock*. As the 2020 election drew near, I decided to write *God, Trump and the 2020 Election* as my way to try to wake up the Christian community. The first chapter is called "Why Trump Must Win," because I thought, *Things are so difficult in America that we just cannot turn this country over to the Left*.

But the second chapter, "Why Trump Might Lose," said if the economy crashed or a war started, it might cause him to lose no matter who his opponent was. Another reason I said Trump might lose—and probably the main one—was fraud. And the book predicted much of the potential fraud, including China's involvement, which we have since seen.

Following the vote on Nov. 3 when it looked like the election might go in Donald Trump's favor, we decided at Charisma Media and *charismanews.com* to play it fairly straight but avoid calling Joe Biden the president-elect until the election was certified, partly because Christian leaders were almost unanimously saying something miraculous would keep Trump in office.

Once the U.S. Senate certified the election, we began referring to him as President-elect Biden. And of course, we now respect him as President Biden. Scripture instructs us to pray for our leaders, which we will do.

As the election tightened, I asked a Christian leader in confidence what I should do if Trump weren't elected. And this leader, whose name you would recognize, said, "Well, you're not really making the prophecies; you're just reporting that they happened."

And that's right. I am not a prophet. I've never been a prophet; that's not my gift. But there were a number of prophets who were very certain that Trump would be elected. Just



"All I can do is try to be faithful to do what God has called me to do."

as we published their prophecies, we have also published some of their apologies, and they said it well not blaming others.

Although I personally believe Trump won and that the election was stolen, it's never been my responsibility to prove it. Instead I'm trying to stay faithful to my life-long call to inform Christians and provide a platform for different ministries to report things you can't read in secular media or even in some of the liberal Christian media. All the while, I'm hoping to inspire readers to experience the power of the Holy Spirit.

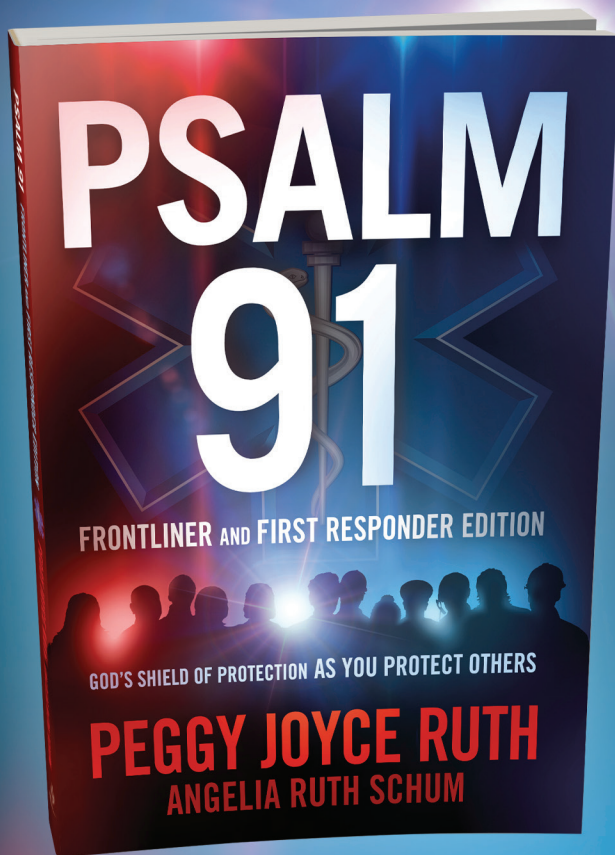
Moving forward, we will grapple with how to understand times like this when God doesn't come through in the way we thought He would or should.

Job 1:21 b says, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." And whenever things happen that don't make sense to us, we have to remember that God is still in control. He has plans and purposes we don't understand.

I don't understand what's happened, and I'm not going to try to defend Donald Trump. He is who he is; he answers to God. But I also don't back off from my writing or my podcasts. They were all sincere, and they were all from the perspective of what I believed God was saying. And I hope that you'll give me the grace—and Charisma Media the grace—of missing this, in a manner of speaking.

In the end, we must remember the words of the prophet Isaiah: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

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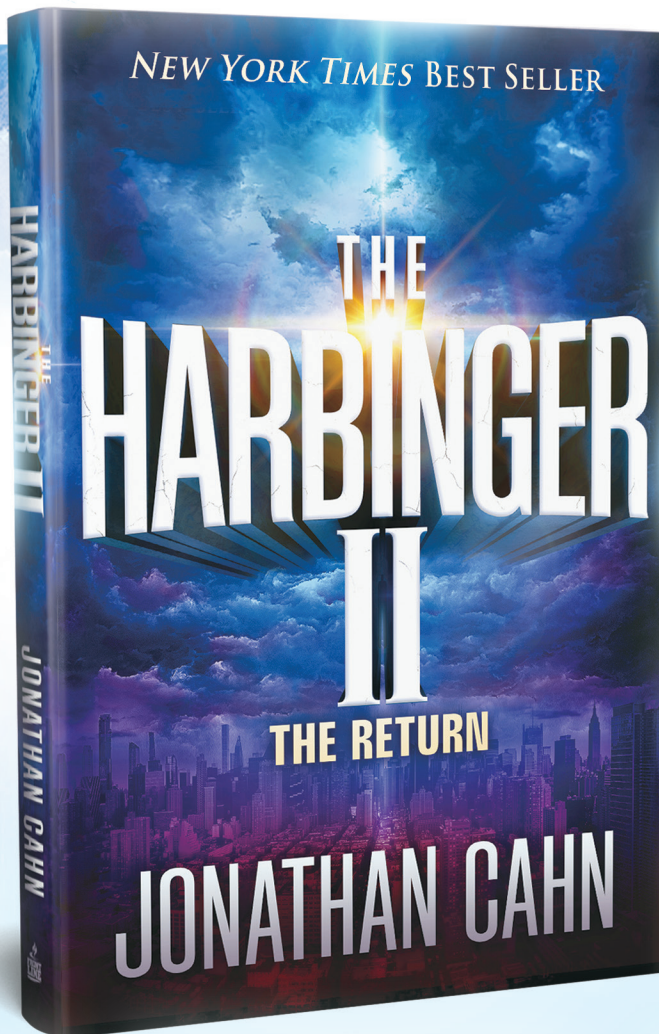
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