CHARISMA

JULY 2024

THE MAGAZINE ABOUT SPIRIT-LED LIVING

FORTHE FALL I

Living in victory through the most chaotic times in history

THE BIG DOG'S NEXT HUNT "DOG" THE BOUNTY HUNTER

LEARNING TO LIVE AGAIN TRACY DUHON GETTING REAL IN THE CAUSE OF JESUS MONDO DELA VEGA

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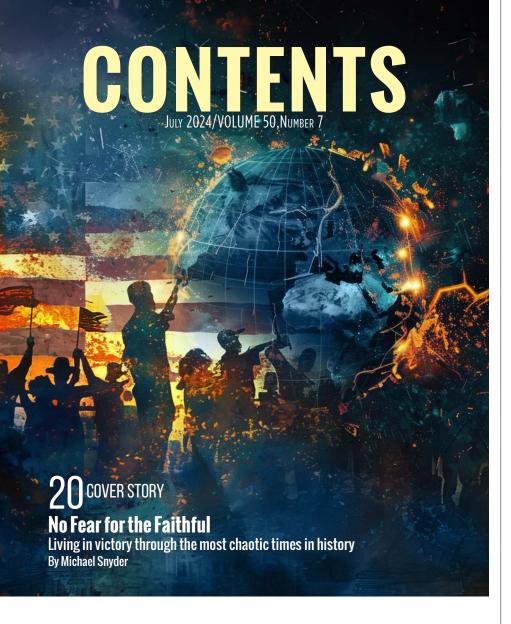
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DEAR CHARISMA



"Grady's story... gave us a chance to think about this painful topic and what can be done about it."

> —Ellouise Sangridsson, Houston, TX

HOORAY LEE GRADY!

Charisma magazine led the reporting of the TV ministry scandals of the 1980s and has usually been a voice of calm and unity through the years. Grady's story ("Cover Story: It's Time for an Honest Apology to Women," Charisma Magazine Online, May 2024) about abuse cases in church leadership gave us a chance to think about this painful topic and what can be done about it.

Ellouise Sangridsson, Houston, TX

EDITOR'S NOTE: Former Charisma editor J. Lee Grady's May 2024 cover story in Charisma Magazine Online also presented a special section, "Declaration of Repentance: A Sincere Apology to Our Sisters in Christ," as a roadmap forward to healing and reconciliation for the body of Christ.

SOUANDER NOT

Brown's new book Turn the Tide scared me, but I'm glad I heard about it after seeing this article of his ("We Dare Not Squander This Moment," Charisma Magazine Online, May 2024). Reminded me of warnings and prophecies in the history books, but his takes are always so detailed and soundly presented. Glad to know he has this forum.

Chet Woodsworth, via X/Twitter

PENTECOST 2024

This "BaptizeAmerica 2025" idea is inspiring, as the article said, it's like the Jesus Movement of the 1970s ("Pentecost 2024: Waves of Pentecost Unity Across the Nation," Charisma Magazine Online, May 2024), but with today's youngsters and teens. Hope they follow their grandparents example, taking the gospel around the world

Gladys Maviston, San Diego, CA

"DECLARATION OF REPENTANCE"

Charisma did a good job trying to report the impacts from the Bickle scandal, and the "Declaration of Repentance" is a fair start ("Cover Story: It's Time for an Honest Apology to Women," Charisma Magazine Online, May 2024), but I wonder what will become of it after the news cycles wind down, or the next scandal takes over the news. I hope Charisma helps this effort maintain some momentum for real progress and improvement.

Anonymity requested, via email

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Simply Christ

Gospel Insight
with Keith Surface

Speaking in Tongues - Part 3

Years ago, while in Israel along with a group from a large church in the Houston area, my dad was asked to speak to the church group at the Mount of Olives. As he spoke, the presence of God settled upon him and those who were gathered there. There was silence for a long while after he finished, then finally the Armenian tour guide, who was a professor at the Hebrew University, stood with tears in his eyes and said, "This man has prepared the way for me to give you the tour I have always wanted to give instead of what I am instructed to tell you.

Two days later at the Sea of Galilee, an elder from the large church approached my dad and asked if he would go for a walk with him. He said, "I love my church. The worship is wonderful, and we have all the gifts of the Spirit in operation in every service. We used to believe we had to wait on the Spirit of God to speak in tongues, but now we understand these things are our gifts and we can use them at any

time. But when you spoke yesterday evening, I felt the presence of God for the first time in many years. Will you pray with me? I want to feel the presence of God again.

The contradiction in this man's words was astounding. He was convinced that his church was experiencing the great gifts and manifestation of God's Spirit, while at the same time it was also void of the presence of God. Such is never the case. Yet tens of thousands if not millions think they have the same great spiritual manifestations without God's presence upon them. Something is very wrong when that is the case.

Above fifty years ago, a "new revelation" began to take hold in

and we have all n every service. on the Spirit of we understand an use them at any

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by Leroy Surface

Spirit-filled churches. Until that time, it was known by those who received the Holy Ghost Baptism that the operation of the spiritual gifts came and operated at the express will and visitation of God. The Bible says, "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit..." I Corinthians 12:11. The "new revelation" said that speaking in tongues and the gifts of the Spirit were our gifts and we could use them at our will. People began to be taught how to speak in tongues. Others were given "primer" words to repeat. While still others were told to simply speak what they heard in their mind.

Even many of those who had received the Spirit by visitation from Heaven were seduced by this "new revelation." I remember how strange it was the first time I heard a minister instruct everyone to speak in tongues. This was a startling thing! We knew tongues came by the moving of God's Spirit and not by the urging of man. It soon began to be taught that tongues were our prayer language and we could and should pray in tongues at our will. It sounded spiritual to some, but it was not. It became mechanical. Entire congregations of people would supposedly pray "in the Spirit," and the Spirit of God was not even in the building. You could go to an altar and there was no need to really talk to God. You could just speak in tongues. You could do it in church, while watching

television, or (as some claim) after committing fornication. It was your gift. But was it from God?

I do not write these things because I do not believe in the Baptism with God's Spirit and spiritual gifts, but because I do! The speaking in tongues that is God's witness to you and everyone else that His Spirit has come still works exactly the same way as on the Day of Pentecost. They spoke in tongues "as (and only as) the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:4. What a mistake it is to lose that sovereign visitation in order to join the voices of tens of thousands who speak in tongues or prophesy at their will, that is, if you are one who would rather have the presence of God.



Gifts of the Spirit Series: **How the Word of Knowledge Works**

"If you will surrender to

Him, He will jump-start

His power in your life."

word of knowledge gives the facts about a situation, whereas a word of wisdom tells how God wants to deal with it. I remember seeing this in action when I attended one of Kathryn Kuhlman's crusades in Lakeland, Florida, in 1975. I wrote about the experience in Florida Magazine, the Sunday magazine of the Sentinel Star (now called Orlando Sentinel), where I worked at the time.

Kathryn Kuhlman was well known for "calling out" miracles with a word of knowledge, but I'd never personally seen her do it before attending that crusade. My article described what I saw: "Then, suddenly, she pointed toward the back of the arena. 'Someone with varicose veins has just been healed.' Before that person can respond she says an ear has been healed, then that

bursitis has been healed. Christians call this a 'Word of Knowledge,' one of seven New Testament gifts given by the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul said this gift gives knowledge to a person about something that has just happened. The announcements of healing in this manner continue off and on for an hour."

At the time, I considered the newspaper to be very liberal and secular. But in today's climate, I doubt an editor would even assign the story, let alone let me describe gifts of the Spirit. (A few months after I wrote about Kuhlman, I started *Charisma* and published a revised version of the article as the cover story of our second issue.)

One of the most incredible accounts I've heard came from Reinhard Bonnke, the German evangelist who declared, "Africa shall be saved," and whose ministry reached an estimated 79 million before his death in late 2019. I had the privilege of getting to know Bonnke well after he moved his ministry to Orlando in the early 2000s. In his book Evangelism by Fire, he explains that we don't always have to know what God is doing when we're given a word of knowledge, we are simply to deliver the message and let the Holy Spirit do the rest.

To illustrate the point, Bonnke told an amazing story. He and his brother had grown up in the same household with godly parents, but while Bonnke had chosen to follow Jesus, his brother had not. Instead, his brother had chosen the path of financial success and had an amazing career.

Many years passed, and there was little communication between the brothers. Unknown to Reinhard Bonnke, his brother's wife had left him and his best friend had died of cancer. His life had become meaningless to him. Then he had a vivid dream one night that he was walking on a bridge high in the air. He slipped and started falling.

Bonnke's brother woke up drenched in sweat. Shaken by the dream, he got down on his knees and said, "Lord, You know that I do not even know that You exist, but my brother Reinhard is Your servant. Give me a sign through him that You are alive."

Meanwhile, Bonnke was 6,000 miles away in South Africa. He didn't know anything about his brother's problems or, as he would later learn, that he was considering taking his own life. But

> early one morning he too had a terrible dream. He saw his brother walking on a bridge high in the air. It was foggy and the bridge had no railings, so Bonnke feared his brother might slip and fall off. His brother continued walking into the fog. In the dream, Bonnke desperately called out his brother's name. Then he

heard his brother's voice crying out from the bottomless depths below the bridge.

Bonnke woke up and asked the Lord the meaning of the dream and sensed God telling him that his brother was on the bridge to eternity and he was to warn him. Bonnke put his reservations aside and immediately wrote his brother a letter, telling him of the dream. He pleaded with his brother to receive Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

A few days before Christmas that year, Bonnke received a letter from his brother in reply. He had accepted Christ and knew that his sins were forgiven. Bonnke said: "When I received that letter, I could not control my emotions, and I just wept for joy. How wonderful the Holy Spirit is! How effective are His gifts! They are God's powerful weapons."

The gifts of the Spirit aren't reserved for a select few who are "super anointed." If we are filled with the Holy Spirit and being led by Him, the gifts should manifest in our lives. God wants His gifts flowing through you; all He needs is your availability. If you will surrender to Him, He will jump-start His power in your life.

Stephen Strang has seen major changes in the church, the culture and technology since he founded Charisma magazine in 1975. In addition to being CEO of Charisma Media, he hosts a Strang Report podcast live on YouTube and Rumble at 4 p.m. EST every Tuesday and Thursday. His latest book Spirit-Led Living in an Upside-World is available wherever fine Christian books are sold and on Amazon.com.



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FIRE IN MY BONES BY J. LEE GRADY



Break Free from Today's Fake Outrage Culture

"When you cut ties with

someone because they

hurt you, you are missing

nger has reached the boiling point in our country. Why are people so on edge? Some experts note that we live in a politically polarized society where people view looting, arson or gun violence as acceptable means of expressing their anger.

It has also become fashionable to lace conversations and social media posts with profanity. Whether it's regular TV programs, talk radio, political TV shows, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, online comment sections or street protests, we've developed the skill of dropping verbal bombs on each other.

We don't care how our words hurt people anymore. We've become vicious. Our love has turned to ice.

We are naïve if we don't recognize that this cold-hearted hatefulness is affecting Christians. I've noticed that believers today

get offended more easily when something goes wrong at church.

The world tells us that ending a relationship is as easy as hitting the unfriend button or canceling a celebrity because of something he or she tweeted two decades ago. But when I read the Bible, I don't see any room for outrage, resentment, intolerance or culture." Jesus calls us to love-and He gives us the supernatural power to do it.

Have you considered ending a relationship recently? Did you already walk out of a church, or break a close friendship, during the last few years? I know many people who have.

If so, examine your heart and ask these probing questions first:

» Am I giving up too soon? Your love will never grow unless it is stretched—and the best way to stretch your love is to show kindness when you feel like slamming a door in someone's face.

We often give up on relationships because we don't want to exert the energy to improve them. Relationships require a lot of work. When you cut ties with someone because they hurt you, you are missing an opportunity to become more like Christ. Show some patience. Choose to love even when you don't get anything in return. Act quickly to repair the relationship before it gets worse.

» Would Jesus end this relationship? When you end a friendship because of an offense, you are doing the exact opposite of what Jesus did for you. Ephesians 4:32 (MEV) says, "Be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you." You will never understand God's merciful love if you don't show it to others.

Jesus loved us even when we were sinners, and He patiently drew us to Himself using "ropes of kindness and love," (Hos.11:4b, NLT). Before you end a friendship, judge a pastor, storm out of a church or "cancel" someone, remember how aggressively Jesus pursued a relationship with you. Let His ropes of kindness pull you out of your bad attitude.

When Peter asked Jesus how many times we are required to forgive a person, Jesus answered "seventy times seven" (see Matt. 18:22). Taken literally, that means 490 times—but Jesus wasn't proposing a mathematical solution. He was using the number

seven to imply infinity. Stop counting how many times you have been offended and instead thank God for all the times He has overlooked your mistakes.

» Am I nursing a grudge? Today's culture of outrage tells us that anger is fashionable. Ranting is an actual genre of social expression. Our caustic political

poisoning ourselves.

Many Christians are mad that a pastor slighted them. They are jealous of someone who took a ministry position they wanted. They are angry because a Christian did something hypocritical—yet they refuse to admit that their bitterness is the ultimate hypocrisy!

Resentment is deadly. It actually can make you sick. Unforgiveness puts a frown on your face, wrinkles around your eyes and a sour tone in your voice. On the flip side, showing affection is healthy for you. Doctors have proven that a 20-second hug strengthens your immune system.

Don't let today's outrage culture infect you. Go against the flow of toxic hate. Make a decision today to work harder at diligent to preserve the unity of the Holy Spirit.

an opportunity to become climate encourages people to get up mad more like Christ." in the morning, fuel their anger with hot political rhetoric throughout the day and then go to bed after listening to more arguments on cable news broadcasts. We are now literally

relationships. Show some love. Forgive those who hurt you. Be

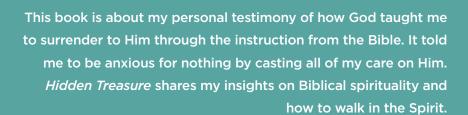
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"Pray, take God-inspired

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od loves you and He has a good plan for your life. You are a wonderful creation made by Him and you have a unique purpose to fulfill in this

Ephesians 2:10 (AMP) says that as Christians, "For we are His workmanship [His own master work, a work of art], created in Christ Jesus...for good works, which God prepared [for us] beforehand [taking paths which He set], so that we would walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us]."

It's so exciting to know we are each created with a purpose and God has a good life that He has prepared in advance for us to live. But it's important to understand that we have an enemy, Satan, who wants to keep us from having the life Jesus died to give us.

Yes, Satan has a plan for us, too, and his plan is destruction and death. John 10:10 (ESV) says the enemy "comes only to steal and kill and destroy."

The good news is we have everything we need through Christ to overcome the enemy. We just have to know who we

are in Christ, believe that we have His authority, and know how to release the power God has given us.

To do this, we have to rely on our faith in God. Romans 12:3 (ESV) says each person has a "measure of faith that God has assigned." This means God has given you enough faith to do His will, whatever it may be and no matter what the enemy throws at you to stop you.

There are many challenges and difficult situations we have to face in life. You may have a child with special needs to care for, or maybe you're in a difficult marriage. You could be facing a devastating illness or have serious financial problems. Whatever your situation is, God has given you everything you need, through Christ, to keep you moving forward in His plan

We need to always remember that God is greater than our problems-nothing is too hard for Him and nothing catches Him by surprise. When we're going through hard times and the enemy is attacking us, we don't need to ask, "What can I do?"

The question is, "What can God do?" The Word says all

things are possible with God, and greater is He who lives in me than he who is in the world (Matthew 19:26 and 1 John 4:4).

I want you to really get this in your heart today: In Christ, you have enough faith and the strength you need to do whatever you need to do in life! Get rid of "I can't" thinking and focus on the truth of God's Word, which says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!" (Phil. 4:13, NKJV).

Prayer is a simple, powerful way to interrupt Satan's plan because we release our faith through prayer. First Thessalonians 5:17 (ESV) says, "Pray without ceasing." This basically means prayer can be as natural as breathing, and our first response in every situation. It's so amazing that we can talk to God all the time.

Now the enemy doesn't want us to pray, so he will do

everything he can to discourage us. He wants us to think prayer is hard, that we need to use eloquent speech and sound poetic, that we need to be careful what we ask God for so we don't overload Him with too many requests, or that we have to be in a certain place with a certain posture (on our knees, head

bowed, eyes closed) for God to hear us. But it's actually simple to pray effectively.

James 5:16 (ESV) says, "... The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." God wants you to come to Him honestly, with a sincere heart, and just talk to Him as a friend. Be yourself and don't approach conversation with God as a religious activity. Humble yourself before Him and open your heart to Him.

He loves you and wants you to walk in His will for your life victoriously, "For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you shall call upon Me, and you shall come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you," (Jer. 29:11-12).

As a believer in Jesus Christ, you are God's child and He is always with you. He is Almighty God, and if God is on your side, who can be against you?

In Christ, you have what you need today to live in victory. Put your faith in God constantly. Pray, take God-inspired

action, and fulfill your true purpose in life!

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times' bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries Inc. She has authored 130 books, including Battlefield of the Mind and her newest devotional, Quiet Times With God (FaithWords). She hosts the Enjoying Everyday Life radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit joycemeyer.org.

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6 Keys for Supernatural Evangelism In an Age of Secular Mysticism

"Our goal is not to

entertain peoples' spiritual

curiosities, but to lead

them to repentance, faith

and transformation."

s the world becomes increasingly secular and skeptical of organized religion, the Christian church faces new challenges in evangelism and discipleship. Many people today, especially younger generations, are drawn to alternative spiritual practices and forms of "secular mysticism" rather than traditional church. This presents both obstacles and opportunities for spreading the gospel.

On one hand, the rise of practices like meditation, astrology, crystals and New Age philosophies can make it harder to reach people with the message of Christ. These alternative spiritualities often promote a vague sense of the "divine" or "higher power" without the need for the biblical God, Jesus or the church. People seeking spiritual fulfillment may be satisfied by these more individualistic

forms of mysticism and have little interest in organized Christianity.

However, the yearning for the supernatural and mystical that drives much of this secular spirituality can also be leveraged for the gospel. At its core, the Christian faith is profoundly mystical rooted in encounters with the living God, the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit and the miracles and mysteries of the kingdom of God. We must reclaim and celebrate it as the foundation of our faith.

This is where the strategy of "supernatural evangelism" comes in. Rather than relying solely on intellectual arguments or moral exhortations, we must demonstrate the power and reality of the spiritual realm. This means being bold in sharing testimonies of divine healing, prophetic words, deliverances and other manifestations of God's supernatural activity. It means praying for miracles and expecting to see them.

Of course, supernatural evangelism must be grounded in sound biblical teaching. We are not peddling some New-Age facsimile of Christianity, but the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our goal is not to entertain peoples' spiritual curiosities, but to lead them to repentance, faith and transformation.

In this age of secular mysticism, the church must not be afraid to embrace and demonstrate the supernatural power of our faith. Doing so with wisdom, discernment and hearts burning for the lost, we can see a new great awakening and the building up of Christ's church like never before. The time is ripe for supernatural evangelism to reach a world hungry for the divine.

The church can spread the gospel and serve this yearning for the supernatural and mystical using these six strategies:

- 1) Emphasize the Biblical Supernatural: The church can highlight miracles, healings, prophecies and encounters with God. These supernatural aspects of the Christian faith demonstrate that Christianity is not devoid of mystical experiences but is, in fact, deeply rooted in the supernatural.
- 2) Provide Authentic Encounters: The church can create environments of authentic encounters with the supernatural power of God through prayer, worship and prophetic ministry, where

individuals can experience the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in a tangible way.

- 3) Share **Testimonies:** Sharing testimonies of supernatural encounters and transformations demonstrate the reality of God's power. Personal stories of healing, deliverance and divine intervention are inspiring tools for reaching all who seek spiritual experiences.
- 4) Offer Spiritual Discernment: The church can provide spiritual discernment to help people find clarity between genuine

encounters with the supernatural and deceptive or harmful practices.

- 5) Engage in Supernatural Evangelism: Supernatural evangelism looks like prayer for miracles, prophetic words and demonstrating Holy Spirit power in tangible ways.
- 6) Foster Culture of Prayer and Spiritual Gifts: Prayer and spiritual gifts are where the church can build an environment inviting the supernatural power of God regularly manifested, drawing people to the reality of the gospel.

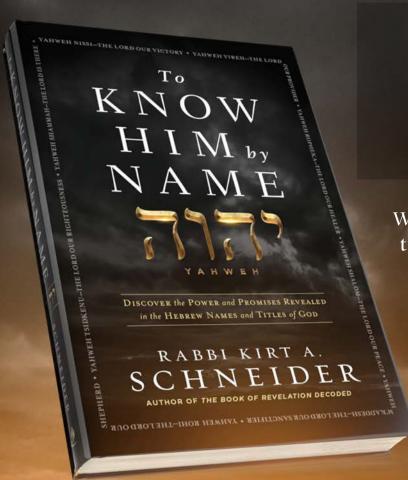
The church can reach those seeking spiritual fulfillment and experiences through Bible teaching, authentic encounters and supernatural evangelism, demonstrating Holy Spirit power and the reality of the gospel in a way that resonates with those who are drawn to the mystical aspects of spirituality. Secular seekers then can be shepherded each step closer to the life-changing connection with the

living Lord Jesus and be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Charlie Shamp is Co-Founder and President of Destiny Encounters International. He is a sought-after international keynote speaker, having ministered nationally and internationally with radical demonstrations of faith seeing lives transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit.



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Compiled by Charisma Staff

Spirit-Led Names and News



Oral Roberts University Commencement Video Goes Viral

n Instagram reel from Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma, featuring its 2024 Commencement Ceremony, earned more than 8 million views in a week.

The video, filmed by ORU senior Alexis Franklin, showcases the graduating class singing "Goodness of God" by CeCe Winans, standing in stark contrast to the turmoil, protests and canceled graduations that have occurred this year at numerous U.S. institutions.

"That song represents so many stories at ORU," Franklin said. "The lyrics encompass all the emotions of someone who has finished their degree. The Class of 2024 made it to the finish line, and

this moment was like capturing everybody's 'thank vou' to God.

"This video and the global response to it are testaments to the Spirit-empowered culture at our university," said ORU President Dr. William M. Wilson. "Our graduates receive an education that is both academically excellent and spiritually enriching. The fact that our Commencement worship resonated with millions shows that faith is important to the world. People want to experience God's love, and they are seeking peace in the midst of drama and trauma. To God be the glory!"

This year's graduating class was the largest in ORU's history, with 925 degree candidates.

Billy Graham Statue Unveiled in US Capitol

The work of art will present a biblical witness to congressional visitors for years to come

amed evangelist Billy Graham, who died in 2018 at age 99, received a unique honor May 16, with the unveiling of a 7-foot bronze statue at the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. The statue, created by North Carolina sculptor Chas Fagan, features Graham pointing to an open

Bible and will be installed in the Crypt, one level below the Rotunda, where every public tour of the Capitol begins. Engraved on its pedestal are two Scripture verses that proclaim gospel truth, John 3:16 and John 14:6.

"My father would be a little uncomfortable with this being here," said Franklin Graham. "Because he would want the focus to be on the one whom he preached: the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

But House Speaker Mike Johnson thinks the elder Graham would approve of the statue's "perfect placement"—and its potential to reach visitors with the gospel. "What a story to tell as we bring school kids through and university students and constituents; they'll stop right here," he said. "And at the base of the foundation those two verses will be shared broadly."



In a season of mental-health struggles and diminishing support, more chaplains are needed

ear Admiral Gregory Todd, the Navy's chief of chaplains, knows what it's like to be a spiritual first responder—and he says today's mental health climate means more help is needed.

Before joining the Navy, he served as a pastor for six years. During his time in the Navy Chaplain Corps, which also covers the Marines and Coast Guard, he has served as a chaplain in all three branches. responded to ground zero after 9/11 and deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan. As chief of chaplains, he now advises the heads of the Navy, Coast Guard and Marine Corps on all matters pertaining to religion.

"Some of the things in our society that built resilience in people, the strength of the church, strength of organizations like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, strength of schools, football teams, sports leagues ... that helped build resilience in people, and those have become less and less over the years," he says in an interview with Gordon Robertson of The 700 Club.

"I would ask for prayers for more chaplains ... We need more adventurous clergy that want to be part of young people's lives and help them through this challenge."



'Hero' in Chaplaincy

Mariorie Holland. first female AG chaplain, dies at 98

arjorie Hieter Holland, one of the first ordained women in Pennsylvania and the first female Assemblies of God chaplain, has died at age 98.

"Chaplain Marge Holland was passionate about sharing Jesus with prisoners. She was very

serious about God's redemptive work," says Manny Cordero, senior director of AG Chaplaincy Ministries, a window of U.S. Missions. "She was well

respected by administration, staff, inmates and volunteers."

Holland met her late husband, George Holland, while both were serving in the Navy, and later pastored a church in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, with him. The two also worked together as chaplains at the State Correctional Institution at Huntingdon, and she was the chaplain at the Huntingdon County Jail. After her husband's death in 1979, Holland completed her education and became a chaplain at Western Center in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, then Muncy Women's Correctional Institute.

"For her, there was no one beyond the reach of the gospel," Cordero says. "I had the privilege to learn insights about being a correctional chaplain from her. She is one of my heroes in chaplaincy."

Holland is survived by five children, 10 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held April 26 at State College Assembly of God, State College, Pennsylvania.

Kubal asks that we:



5 Ways to Stand in the Gap for America

The president of Intercessors for America shares his powerful prayers

ave Kubal, president and CEO of Intercessors for America, offers five insightful ways to pray for the United States.

"America needs all the prayers she can get right now—but more than that, she needs faith-filled intercessors who will do more than just pray," he says. "These are the people who will stand in the gap, placing themselves between the nation and the Lord, crying out for mercy."

1) Pray for godly leadership. In Scripture, godly kings such as Asa, Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah prayed, sought God's prophets for counsel and tried to please Him, qualities we desperately need.

2) Pray for Shalom in America. More than just "peace," the Hebrew word Shalom can mean "May things be the way they ought to be." Ask God to right wrongs, bring justice, overcome evil and more.

3) Pray for the church. The church is accountable for a nation's spiritual condition.

4) Pray for revival. To revive something means to bring it back from the dead. Revival must begin in the church and spread far beyond it.

5) Pray for intercessors who will answer the call. Ezekiel 22:30 says the Lord was seeking intercessors—without success. Pray that God would find many intercessors today.





Big Heart, for a **Small-Town Servant**

Irene Hughes goes with God

rene Hughes of Crawfordsville, Nebraska, has a long history of caring for others in ways that have shifted with the changing seasons of her life. After many vears of working as a nurse and then an in-home daycare provider, the restaurant owner and entrepreneur is finding fresh ways to serve her community in the name of Jesus.

"I want to help ease the extra burden on people when I can," says Hughes, who prepares gift baskets for individuals and families when she sees a need, filling them with homemade meals and paper products. When the town's only motel was struggling and becoming inaccessible, she turned the building next to her restaurant into a nightly rental to aid those coming to Crawfordsville to see family. And when the only grocery store in town closed, she started a small market in her restaurant to offer fresh food and other items, along with delivery service.

"Irene has a heart to serve the community," says Pastor Steve Mallery of Christ Community Church, where Hughes has been an active member and sound board operator for 20 years. "She has always considered others before herself. She lives out the command to love God and love people."

The Christian life isn't about doing things the easy way—

it's about living as Christ even in a hostile environment.

Living out the Christian life isn't just a suggestion; it's something we are each called to do. With *Jesus and Politics*, you'll discover how to disciple a nation, one heart at a time by:

- Cultivating intimacy with Jesus, even in a hostile culture and amid life's pressures.
- Effectively sharing the gospel, discipling others, and standing up for the truth in various settings.
- Engaging in politics and various spheres of government to protect liberty in America.

One Woman's Walk With God in a Mudslinging Profession

BUNNI POUNDS

Afterword by the Honorable Michele Bachmann





FOR THE LANGE OF T

Living in victory through the most chaotic times in history

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

f you understand God's plan, there is no reason for fear. Way too often, when we talk about the end times we focus on all of the bad things that are going to happen. And without a doubt, the Bible describes events that are so cataclysmic that many of us have difficulty imaging what they will be like. In the years ahead, we are going to witness death and destruction on a scale that is absolutely unprecedented in human history. In Matthew 24, Jesus specifically warns us that there has never been a time like it before and there will never be a time like it again. I literally do not have the words to fully convey to you how chaotic things will eventually become. There will be apocalyptic wars, horrific famines, terrifying pestilences and historic natural disasters.

But God didn't tell us about all of these things in advance so that we would be afraid. In fact, He told us about all of these things in advance so that we *would not* be afraid.

continued »



God knows everything that is going to happen, and He is in control. Don't ever forget that. And God has a very specific plan for your life.

God decided that you would be alive now. You were born for such a time as this, and that should excite you very much. All of human history has been building up to a grand crescendo, and you get to be here for it. God created you for a purpose, and you have a job to do.

But if you allow yourself to descend into an abyss of depression and despair as global events spiral out of control, you could miss everything that God has for you during this time. No matter what happens, we must trust God's plan.

Shaken, Stirred and Gloom?

During the years ahead, so many Christians are going to have their faith greatly shaken because circumstances did not turn out the way that they expected. Sadly, when conditions become bad enough there are going to be people out there that literally kill themselves because their expectations have been shattered. We must be willing to surrender our own plans, programs and expectations and embrace what God wants to do. Because what God wants is always what is best for us.

There are some people out there that have labeled me a "doom and gloomer" because I speak frankly about the things that the Bible says are coming. But I am not a "doom and gloomer" at all. I am not down, I am not depressed and I am certainly not defeated. I live in

victory every day, and you can live in victory every day too if you have the proper perspective.

Greatest Witness Season of All Time

Right now, lots of bad things are happening in our world, and the pace of events is only going to accelerate during the months ahead. But you shouldn't respond to the challenges that we are facing by curling up into a ball and crying your eyes out. Every time something catastrophic happens, it is another sign that what the Bible says about the end times is true—and every time something else catastrophic happens, it is another sign that the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is iust around the corner.

At the end of the story, we get to be with Him forever, and Hollywood has never come up with an ending that is greater than that. If you know Christ, even if you die tomorrow you will be with Him for millions and billions and trillions of years, and that will be only just the beginning.

So, let's get over our fear of death.

Those of us who are believers have no reason to fear death at all. But those that do not know Christ certainly have reason to fear death. There are approximately eight billion people alive on this planet today, and there are more souls currently hanging in the balance than there ever has been before. So, our goal should be to reach as many of them with the gospel as we possibly can while there is still time to do so.

We are on the greatest rescue mission in the history of the world, and the clock is ticking. Personally, I am praying for an open door to preach the gospel over in Israel once the war in the Middle East is over. This war in the Middle East is one of the three big wars that I have been warning about for years. At some point, I believe, it will take an apocalyptic turn and the death and destruction that we will witness in the Middle East will horrify the entire world.

And I hate to spoil the surprise for those who don't understand what is going to happen, but Israel is going to win.

That is certainly good news, but it is going to be such a terrible war. In the aftermath of the war, I believe that we are going to see the establishment of a Palestinian state as part of a Middle East peace plan. The U.S. will be involved in that peace plan, and that will be a tragic mistake. Because once the land of Israel is divided, our land will be divided, too.

We should be watching the war in Ukraine as well. According to the *New* York Times, for the first time Ukraine has formally requested that NATO troops be sent into the country. That is extremely alarming, because if western troops get involved in the conflict, that will put us just one step away from a nuclear showdown with Russia.

Many years ago, when I would warn that there would eventually be war with Russia, a lot of people out there thought that I was crazy. I was told that "the Cold War is over" and that Russia was now our friend. But now Russia is steadily gaining ground in Ukraine and both sides are absolutely obsessed with "winning" this war. In the end, it is a story that is not going to end well.

Meanwhile, the Chinese continue to threaten Taiwan. Most Americans don't realize this, but the moment China would invade Taiwan, we will be in a state of war with China.

Living Through Book of Revelation

We really are living in a time of "wars and rumors of wars" (see

Matthew 24), and global conflict is going to be one of the major themes of the next few years. All throughout human history, famine has accompanied war, and it won't be any different now. Last year, CNN admitted that we are already in the midst of the worst global food crisis in modern history, and conditions continue to deteriorate all over the globe. In fact, Reuters recently reported that hunger has become so severe in some parts of Sudan that people are actually making dirt balls and swallowing them with water just so that they will have something in their stomachs.

For now, we still have plenty of food here in the United States. But it sure costs a lot more than it once did. doesn't it?

Also in Matthew 24, Jesus warned us that there would be multiple pestilence episodes during the times just before His return. Needless to say, the pestilence we already have been through have caused quite a bit of fear over the past few years. But more are coming, and they will be even worse than anything we have been through so far.

Right now, I am watching the bird flu very carefully. It has already resulted in the deaths of hundreds of millions of chickens and turkeys around the world, and now it has jumped into mammals. In recent weeks, the fact that so many dairy cows in the U.S. have been catching the bird flu has created a tremendous amount of concern. Many experts believed it could make the jump to humans, and in early June the first victim was reported in Mexico. If a strain of bird flu emerges that easily spreads from human to human, the death toll would be catastrophic. According to the World Health Organization, since 2003 more than 50% of the humans who have caught H5N1 bird flu have died.

We have also been warned that there will be cataclysmic natural disasters during the years ahead. The New Madrid fault zone, the California coast and Mt. Rainier are just some of the areas that I am watching.

2024 also brings a rare "dualbrood" of cicadas, often but incorrectly considered locusts, according to Scientific American. The Eastern area of the U.S. can expect trillions of the swarming bugs from latter Spring through the summer.

And on top of everything else, we are heading into what I believe will be the most chaotic election season in our history. I believe that the outcome of the election will result in even more chaos. I can't think of a better word to describe the times that are just ahead of us. I even entitled my new book

I don't know about you, but I definitely want to be part of what God is doing.

These Are the Days!

Even in the midst of all the chaos and all the darkness, God is going to be doing extraordinary things. Perhaps you are disappointed with how your life has turned out, but that doesn't have to be the end of your story.

Your greatest chapters can still be ahead of you, but you have got to be



Chaos because we really are entering a perfect storm when everything will seem to be going haywire all at once.

But once again, that isn't bad news. If you have the proper perspective, that is actually great news. The birth pains that we are going through tell us that we will soon be with our Savior. And that is definitely something to get excited about. But first, we have some great challenges ahead of us.

As global events spiral out of control, there will be more interest in Bible prophecy than ever before. People will be searching for answers, and we will want to be there to provide them. I am entirely convinced that Bible prophecy will be our most important soul-winning tool during the years ahead.

If you want to be on the cutting edge of the revival that is coming, I encourage you to become very familiar with Bible prophecy. The greatest move of God the world has ever seen-and the greatest harvest of souls-already are on their way.

willing to surrender everything to God. Don't let anyone fill your head with excuses. No matter what you have been through, God can still take the broken pieces of your life and turn them into a beautiful thing.

Yes, things are going to get really bad, but you can choose to live in victory. Our sins have been paid for and our future is to be with Him forever. So don't hold too tightly to the things of this world for they are passing away, but we are looking forward to our eternal inheritance. On our own we can do nothing, but with God all things are possible.

God put you here for a reason, and once you realize that nothing will be able to keep you from living in victory.

Now is the time to rise up and embrace everything that God created you to be. ◀

MICHAEL SNYDER's new book Chaos is available in paperback and Kindle on amazon.com. Subscribe to his Substack newsletter at michaeltsnyder.substack.com. **I MINISTRY** ARE WE RELGHI OR Don't lose who we are in ministry

BY MONDO DE LA VEGA

n the tapestry of faith and amidst the complexities of our culture, the question persists: Should we prioritize preaching or reaching? This inquiry, however, is not a matter of choosing one over the other but rather recognizing the complementary nature of both endeavors.

Drawing from timeless wisdom, let us first heed the words of Matthew 28:19-20 (MEV), where Jesus commissions His disciples, saying, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen." This Scripture emphasizes the importance of preaching, of boldly proclaiming the gospel message to all who will listen.

Preaching Or Reaching?

Preaching serves to guide us how to live a life filled with peace and love for our fellow man, and to give us insights into the teachings of Christ. Sermons serve as a beacon of hope in a world shrouded in darkness, offering a pathway to salvation and reconciliation with God. The following could be controversial and it may offend you. We have to own what has been done from the pulpit and understand that our preaching has inflicted harm. This assertion may be contentious and could potentially cause offense, however it is crucial that we acknowledge this reality. It is evident that spiritual abuse and manipulation have emerged from some of our pulpits, conferences, social media platforms, book publications and even Christian television programs, stemming from sermons that have not been meticulously studied and rooted in the Word of God and without accountability.

A prevalent issue within the church is the lack of biblical literacy. Pastors, evangelists, teachers, missionaries, professors and seminaries often fail to adequately impart the teachings of Scripture. In research by both Focus on the Family and Fuller Seminary, it was reported that 72% of pastors surveyed said they only studied the Bible when they were preparing for sermons or lessons. In another telling data point, 75% of pastors felt they were unqualified and/or poorly trained by their seminaries to lead and manage the church or to counsel others. This left them disheartened in their ability to pastor.

This is a spiritual responsibility we hold as leaders. Instead of meticulously examining the Word and its context, we often cherry-pick texts to construct sermons and presentations, spending more time trying to make sure our illustrated sermons look good with props, give our own stories and "prophesy" what we are feeling at that moment and use "God gave me a word" very loosely. This leads us astray from the

true meaning of Scripture.

Unfortunately, this approach often does more harm than good, hindering rather than aiding individuals in building their faith in God's Word. But more concerning to me is that we have a biblical literacy problem in our congregations. American churchgoers aren't reading or studying the Bible on their own. If we are going to reach the world with the gospel, we must first take time to study and develop in the Word of God and create a lifestyle filled with prayer.

Christians claim to believe the Bible is God's Word. We claim it is God's divinely inspired, inerrant message to us. Yet despite this, we aren't reading it. A recent LifeWay Research study found only 45% of those who regularly

What if the point of the cross wasn't just to be saved but TO BE LOVED?

Do you know what Divine Love is? If you are seeking new depths of intimacy with the Lord, then Rabbi Kirt. A Schneider's practical guidance and insightful analysis in *A Journey Into Divine Love* will help you strengthen your relationship. In Song of Songs – one of the most beautiful portions of God's Word – Rabbi Kirt A. Schneider unlocks Scriptural mysteries, revealing the profound truths that it holds for our spiritual lives today. After reading this book, you will experience personal transformation and spiritual renewal.

Only by knowing the depth of God's love will you achieve a deep and meaningful relationship with Him, so cast away your fears and run toward the One who loves you.

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attend church read the Bible more than once a week. Over 40% of the people attending read their Bible occasionally, maybe once or twice a month. And almost one in five churchgoers say they never read the Bible. If we fail to recognize and comprehend the repercussions of what is happening, we will continue to fall short in fulfilling our duty to preach, teach and equip our congregations to spread the gospel effectively in the Great Commission. Thankfully there is one small sport of good news to be encouraged by, that if we make a small adjustment through starting and implementing small groups more consistently, it would aid in combating and changing the epidemic of biblical illiteracy. Let's hold each other accountable and help one another.

Reaching Or Preaching?

Yet, alongside preaching, there exists a profound call to reach out to others, to extend a hand of compassion and understanding. As Philippians 2:4 advises (MEV), "Let each of you look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." This ethos of reaching emphasizes the importance of embodying the love and grace of Christ in our interactions with others. It involves meeting people where they are, listening with empathy and offering genuine care and support.

In our current cultural environment, characterized by division and polarization, the imperative to both preach and reach is more pressing than ever. We are called not only to articulate the truths of the gospel but also to live them out in our daily lives. This requires courage, humility and a willingness to engage with those who may hold differing beliefs or perspectives. If we can't be genuine and transparent, how can we hope to connect with those who are broken? I've noticed many Christians losing touch with the struggles of those who feel lonely, broken-hearted and burdened by painful, traumatic experiences filled with deep sorrow and resentment.

Approaching people with a predetermined agenda, without investing in genuine relationships, only serves to

"We have HOLY SPIRIT POWER to make the differences in the lives of others, one heartfelt encounter at a time."

push them further away. Our actions carry more weight than our words. If we want others to embrace the message we preach, we must exemplify it through our lives, making it worth following. Constant defensiveness exhausts both ourselves and those around us. There's too much blameshifting and searching for faults, indicating that as a church we have much work to do in learning how to meet people where they are. This doesn't mean compromising our faith, morals or beliefs, rather in finding authentic ways to connect and empathize.

Both-And, Not Either-Or

Let's remind ourselves of the essence of our mission, ensuring that every word we speak and every action we take is infused with love and compassion, rather than any hint of hostility or militancy. This new generation isn't simply searching for another event to attend-they yearn for authentic community, akin to what we witness in the early church described in the book of Acts.

In Acts, the believers weren't just passive participants. They formed a tightly knit community, bonded by their shared devotion to Christ. They engaged in prayer, shared meals, enjoyed fellowship and gleaned invaluable insights from Jesus' teachings. Their unity wasn't confined to spiritual matters, they also met each other's practical needs, freely giving and receiving support, while bearing witness to the awe-inspiring miracles performed by the apostles.

Let's broaden our understanding of preaching and reaching. It is about

embodying the very essence of our faith. Romans 12:13 urges us to actively contribute to the well-being of our fellow believers and to open our hearts and homes in hospitality. This verse underscores the ongoing journey of faith, encouraging us to continually grow and extend the boundless love and grace of God to all, both in our words and our deeds. May we strive to cultivate communities of warmth and genuine love, reflecting the all-embracing compassion of Christ Himself. Let's build bridges of understanding and connection, inviting others to experience the transformative power of God's love in their lives.

Let me share a story that beautifully encapsulates the essence of our discussion. Imagine a weary traveler, lost in the darkness of a dense forest. He stumbles upon a fork in the road, unsure of which path to take. Suddenly, a light appears in the distance, drawing him closer. As he approaches, he hears the gentle voice of a guide offering directions and encouragement. This scene illustrates the interconnectedness of preaching and reaching. As Martin Luther King Jr. so eloquently stated, "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase." Our journey of faith often begins with uncertainty, but it is through preaching and reaching that we illuminate the path for others, guiding them toward the light of God's love.

Just as the weary traveler found hope in the midst of darkness, so too can we offer hope to those who are lost and searching. By embracing both preaching and reaching, we become beacons of light in a world that can often feel dim and foreboding.

Let us heed the words of Mother Teresa, who urged us to spread love wherever we go. For it is through acts of kindness and compassion that we extend God's love to those around us. leaving no one without the opportunity to experience the joy that comes from knowing they are cherished and valued.

In a world where acceptance feels elusive to many, it is vital to extend kindness and embody the Commandments, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength...Love your neighbor as yourself." These principles serve as guiding lights, reminding us never to give in to weariness nor cease our efforts to love one another as profoundly as He first loves us.

In the end, it is not a matter of preaching or reaching—it is the harmonious blend of both, empowering Christ's body to share God's love with the world. So let us journey forth driven by faith and courage, knowing we have Holy Spirit power to make the differences in the lives of others. one heartfelt encounter at a time.

MONDO DE LA VEGA is co-host and executive producer of The Jim Bakker Show, host of The Mondo Show and executive vice president of television programming for the PTL Television Network. With the support of his wife, Elizabeth, and their twins, Mila and Mateo, De La Vega continues to follow the path God laid out for his life as he shares his story around the world. His new book, My Crazy Life, debuted Mar. 5th, and is available now.

HNUIN IN THE GAP

The rise of church security as a ministry

BY A.B. PETRUCCI

hreats of violence against churches are increasing rapidly across America. According to the Family Research Council, hostility and violence against churches is at an all-time-high, with an average of 39 attacks every month and an 800% increase in incidents since 2018. The need for pastors and church leadership teams to protect the "flock" of congregants has never been greater in American history. But can church safety really be a ministry?

Fred Nessler and Robert Squires, two of the leading authorities and trainers on church security and safety in America today, say the answer is yes. Ensuring the safety and security of a church is not just a matter of paying a police officer to stand outside the church building. It should be viewed as a ministry, anchored in a faith-based safety team.

Nessler is a lawyer, an NRA instructor and a black belt in martial arts. Squires has served as a Marine Sargeant and is a highly respected veteran. At Calvary Church in

Springfield, Illinois, both men have advanced an organized, precedent-setting church security ministry, which was the brainchild of Squires.

Nessler and Squires have constructed a system of best practices on how church leaders, especially pastors who have little experience with a formal approach to a faith-based safety team, can initiate and build up a safety team from nothing or take an existing safety team to the next level.

"The Bible says to put a guard at the gate," Nessler says. "In this day and age, there are many threats against faith-based ministry organizations. It's critical to keep the flock of a church safe. We get pushback about church safety initially from some pastors, but once they understand it, they become very supportive."

Pastoral support for the creation of a church safety team is built on preparedness-not a lack of faith in God to protect people. Nessler explains, "We want the safety team to be the most useless ministry in the church, but we have to be prepared for what might come as far as a threat to people's lives."

continued »



What Does It Look Like?

On any given Sunday, the three main worries of a church safety team are terrorism, mentally disturbed people and revenge on the pastor.

Years ago, a pastor in Illinois refused to take the safety team's recommendations and refused to empower his church's safety team in their mission as a ministry. Soon afterward, a deranged

behavior, such as someone wearing a trench coat in summer or carrying a large backpack into church.

A good safety team uses two-way radio communications and text messaging to communicate about potential threats. A potential perpetrator heading into a church building may have no idea that a trained safety team is aware of them and ready to pounce to stop the threat with

"The killer knew the church was a soft target, which means it was vulnerable and unprotected.'

person entered the church and killed the pastor. The killer knew the church was a soft target, which means it was vulnerable and unprotected. If the safety team had been doing what it recommended to do, this pastor would likely be alive today.

"You want people to know there is a safety team in place," says Nessler. "You want to be known as a hard target. As a result, terrorists and crazy people will be dissuaded to attack your church. Terrorists and mentally disturbed people want soft targets where there is little resistance. They don't really want to have to engage with a church safety team. They will go someplace else and leave your church alone.'

Having a safety team/security team as a ministry within a church gives the congregation "a sense of safety and security," according to Nessler. "People who attend our church in Illinois often say 'thank you' to our church security team. They are glad that our team is in place."

The goal of any good safety team at a church is to stop the threat before the violent intruder ever enters the building. The mission is clear.

"As a church security team, we are well-trained for a specific mission of protecting our faith-based flock," says Nessler.

While congregants are praying, worshipping and listening to a sermon inside the sanctuary, the church safety team is tasked with watching all direct and indirect entry points to the church building. They are assessing strange and suspicious

swiftness. Split-second decision-making that is based on sound training in church safety saves lives.

Setting the Record Straight on Church Safety

Some people are uncomfortable with the idea of safety team members carrying firearms in a church building. These people, including more than a few pastors, believe Christians should be non-combative and passive. They believe Jesus was very passive and would never condone the existence of a church safety team. They are concerned that safety team members are simply "being macho."

This could not be further from the truth, according to Nessler. "Having a church safety team is like a good shepherd protecting the flock from the wolves," he says. "Jesus is the Good Shepherd. Jesus was not passive. He was active. Jesus protects people, and He sends people to protect other people. This is not about being macho."

A church safety team is actually rooted in being sacrificial. Joining a church safety team is not for the faint of heart. It requires steely faith.

Nessler reiterates a sobering statement to every church safety team he trains: "This is a ministry you need to be willing to die for, or don't do it. As a member of a safety team at your church, you are tasked with protecting the church congregation, not just your family. Members guit because they could not make this commitment."

The approach that Nessler and Squires developed at Calvary Church and share at different churches across the nation, upon request, consists of three fundamental elements:

- 1) Your church safety team must be **properly trained.** The skills of a safety team are perishable skills. They must be practiced over and over. Volunteers on the safety team use their personal time to practice shooting their firearms at gun ranges, or practice their martial arts skills, or stay current with emergency response tactics. They prepare for various scenarios, thinking through what will be done in a given situation. They are also put through drills and qualification testing.
- 2) You should recruit the right kind of people to join your church safety team. You should look for Christ followers—not people who just walk out of the world. It's ideal to have people who understand what a church congregation is all about and what they are there for. You want to form a team of safety volunteers who are well-rounded, can communicate well with each other and learn from their mistakes along the way. It's recommended to have a mix of ex-police, ex-military, ex-ERMTs, NRA trainers and trained firearm practitioners.
- 3) You should avoid allowing a "buccaneer" to be on your church safety team. The type of person who should not be on a church safety team: anyone who is, says Nessler, "too gung-ho, too macho, too much about themselves." Just as a church would be concerned about bringing on board a self-centered, narcissistic pastor, the leaders of a safety team should be concerned about bringing on board a buccaneer or "Mr. Macho." Self-control, humility and graciousness, as well as fearlessness, decisiveness and action-oriented, are desirable qualities in a member of a church safety team. Do not start your church safety team with just a bunch of concealed carry holders getting together, either.

The Faith-Based Security Network (FBSN) was created to help churches start, improve and fine-tune their church safety teams. Church leaders can receive free support and helpful resources. Ministry leaders can also listen to the "Sheepdog Saturday" podcast episodes from the National Sheepdog Organization. Getting educated is the best thing that pastors can do before launching or growing their church safety team.

Trained in Safe, Responsible Use of Firearms and De-escalation

Iames Dowler, an NRA-certified instructor and owner of Survival of the Fittest, one of Florida's top firearms safety training companies, says that a trustworthy safety team at a church needs individuals with skills to handle a firearm as well as "good de-escalation skills" and a calm demeanor. Character matters.

"We need to be prepared for anything that could happen, but a weapon is the last resort when there is no other way out amid imminent danger," he says as someone who trains people on how to safely and responsibly use firearms, whether for self-defense or as part of a church safety team. He agrees with Nessler that a macho person brandishing a firearm in church is bad news.

The key to the successful actions of a church safety team, according to Dowler, is discernment: "being able to see danger from afar off," "seeing things happening before they do," and reiterating what Nessler said, "keeping any possible act of violence outside."

This is why Dowler suggests that, when a church begins to build a safety team, the church should start outside in the parking lot. "Having people helping with parking to have eyes outside, to be on the perimeter, is critical for identifying a potential threat early on," says Dowler. "Solve issues outside first. Start building the safety team from the outside in."

This firearms safety training afficionado teaches that a church safety member must be vigilant at all times and fully aware of their surroundings, as if their head is on a swivel. The volunteer on the safety team must eliminate distractions, such as looking at their cell phones while on duty for the safety team. The person must be ready to communicate if anything happens, with the intent to keep turmoil in check.

Dowler advises churches to include the following groups within the larger safety team: parking and golf cart folks, the engagement team and first aid/first

responders, all under the same umbrella. Usually, someone is the operational leader of the safety team, while also reporting into a pastor for accountability, just like any other ministry within the church. The safety team is not separate from pastoral covering.

"Being part of a church safety team is like being part of a family," Dowler says. "There is a special camaraderie that naturally develops, and it's built through communicating with each other. It's important for members of a church safety team to get to know each other. The fact that you put your life at risk to protect others in the church creates a bond and demonstrates a strong faith."

He adds, "If a church hires me to help equip their safety team through training or to help develop the church safety team strategy, I'd also advise them to invest in a strong security camera system. Security cameras are a safety team's 'best friends' to help identify a potential threat from

church to bring in an external trainer, equip them and put them to the test. Every member of a church safety team should have advanced firearms training to be ready to take action and stop the threat, when necessary."

Church Safety Confronts Spiritual Attacks

Nessler's takeaway message for church leaders is sobering: "Would you ever believe we'd be carrying a firearm to church? No. But today it's necessary for those committed to the mission and cause of the safety team to protect the flock. The threats to churches are out there. They're real. It's no joke. Times are different now."

Nessler equates the increased need for a safety team at churches to a spiritual battle. Venturing to explain why hostility and violent threats against churches more than doubled between 2022 and 2023, a year when more than 430 incidents

"Having a church safety team is like a good shepherd protecting the flock from the wolves.

afar, providing the opportunity for the armed engagement team to stop the threat outside the building before it's too late. Safety team leads should have access to the security cameras via their mobile phones to support the safety efforts on the move."

Security cameras also keep track of whether a church safety team member is focused on their mission or distracted by their phone. You don't want safety team members crouching down along stairs to avoid the security cameras, so they can look at their phone for personal reasons or hide. The only text messages a team member should be checking are the safety

"Security technology provides an edge, but, at the end of the day, a safety team member needs to be able to safely and responsibly use a firearm—and that's where firearm training comes in. If a church does not have the expertise inside the church, it's common for a were documented, he invoked a statement that Frankling Graham made and applied it to this disturbing trend: "It's as if all the demons of hell have been loosed upon us."

With the heart of a shepherd, the safety team stands in the gap to stop the threat, demonic and otherwise. They stand guard at the gate to God's house. People pray for safety and security, and God responds with the formation and continuous improvement of a safety team. Church safety is a ministry that should be "the most useless" and one that people almost never hear of. But their presence, albeit in the shadows of pastors, greeters and ushers, is vital for partnering with the Holy Spirit to protect everyone from harm. A well-trained, committed safety team could be a matter of life and death.

A.B. PETRUCCI is a contributing writer to Charisma Magazine Online.

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Learning to LIVE ACGAIN

After the Unthinkable

BY TRACY DUHON

n 2017 Troy and I were at a marriage conference at Bethel Church in Redding, California. I remember it vividly. By that point we had been through so much.

We all process pain in our own way. I took to journaling and poured my heart out to God in prayer; Troy dealt with our losses very differently, and it was at that conference that I truly began to see how everything had played out in Troy's heart. He had suppressed his grief and needed to be set free. He needed to release the wound created from the loss of our sons and be revived.

At the conference, Troy and I participated in a workshop where we were led in a process of deep inner healing. The leaders weren't messing around. When they called Troy and me up for ministry, they didn't start with niceties to pass time. They went straight to the heart. It was as though they could see right through Troy and knew exactly what he needed. The workshop leaders started asking Troy questions, probing him to go deeper.

And then it happened.



Catharsis

In front of over 250 people, my husband let it all out. He curled up on the floor and cried out. He was finally releasing the intense pain he'd held for so long. He was letting go of the disappointment and anger that grabbed hold of his heart following the loss of our boys. His emotions were real and raw. It was a beautiful moment; one God chose specifically to heal Troy.

There wasn't a dry eye in the room that day. Everyone was crying, both men and women. Most men look for anything to distract them from the pain they feel. Watching God minister to Troy in that way was incredible and likely set others free.

When we signed up for that conference, it was simply to grow in our marriage; instead, the event freed my husband to be the man he was created to be.

Our beautiful partnership and journey together came full circle in that moment. For so long Troy wanted to protect me and felt he had failed at doing so. He carried that guilt and anger, along with the devastation of losing two boys. God healed Troy's heart at that conference, and He was about to work another miracle in our marriage.

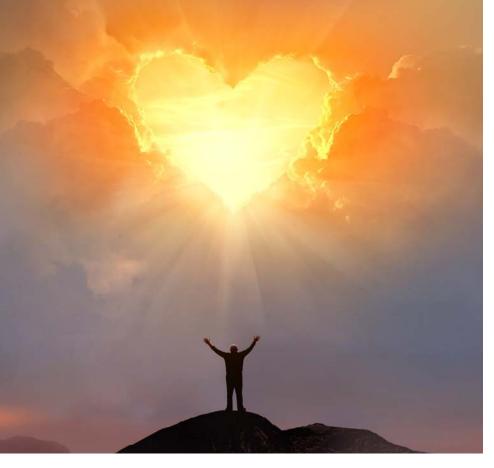
Creating a Legacy

I had prayed and hoped for a miracle following the loss of the boys. I thought the girls were that miracle, but God continued to pour into our lives. By staying the course and listening to the Lord, even when it seemed impossible, we were able to bring something else to life—a ministry that has touched the lives of children in our community and around the world.

None of that would have happened if Troy and I hadn't been together. If we hadn't gotten married, we wouldn't have had the boys or girls or built the orphanages. There would have been no vision, no seeds, no plans.

God used our marriage partnership and losing the boys to create a legacy for them here on earth. We honor them in everything the Lord has allowed us to do, and they live on through the work we do—each child we help, each mouth we feed, each broken heart we meet with compassion. We are led by His Spirit to complete the mission God planted in our hearts—and it is all a testament to our boys.

Although Jonathon and Joseph were here on earth less than 24 hours, they are changing lives across the globe because of the impact they had on our hearts. God used them to break us and show us the world as He needed us to see it. He wanted to direct us to the places He needed us to be. He needed us to walk into the unknown and uncertain places by faith. He carried us through the hardest times in our lives and ultimately breathed life back into our marriage.



God used our pain for a greater purpose, inspiring the work we do with Giving Hope. The boys aren't gone; they are simply being held by the Father until we are all reunited in heaven.

I miss my boys. I sometimes sit in the stillness of morning and wonder what they would be interested in. Would they look more like me or Troy? How would they interact with their brother and sisters? Would they be athletic? Would they be smart? Where would their hearts lead them in this world?

Unable to touch them, I see and feel them through the work we are doing and the lives we continue to reach. Giving Hope has become the answer to all the questions. It is their legacy, and it is anchored in love—a mother's love.

I still don't know medically why we had two sons diagnosed with Potter syndrome, but our experience is a constant reminder that God is always in charge. The COVID pandemic was another reminder of that. While it brought some people closer, it did the opposite for many others. So many people were struggling all over the world.

In the midst of lockdowns and

uncertainty, beautiful spaces were created for deep reflection. My family was home with me. We were together. During that time, I found myself thinking of the boys more and more.

I knew I needed to do something for myself, for my heart and my healing process. I poured all my thoughts and

WE ARE LED BY HIS SPIRIT TO complete the mission God planted in our hearts.

emotions onto paper. I knew the boys would never physically receive these letters, but just writing them put a piece of my heart back together. The letters made me feel as if the boys were with us in those times when we were all together as a family.

Headwaters of Our Journey

There are two things I always knew with absolute certainty: I love God, and I wanted to be a mother.

I LEARNED HOW TO LOVE EXTRAVAGANTLY and give in a way I didn't know I was capable of until I had gone through my own suffering. Only God could have birthed that kind of love in me.

For as long as I could remember, to become a mother was my greatest hope. Long before I ever set foot in a delivery room-even before I got married—I dreamed of how it would feel to hold my precious babies, how my life would change when they arrived. I saw it as such a beautiful miracle, the gift of motherhood.

I never could have prepared myself for the dark, painful path God would lead me down to realize my heart's desire. My journey was marked by heartbreaking loss and sorrow, but I came out on the other side with a greater sense of purpose and a deeper awareness that God's plan is better than my own, even when it includes suffering.

I lay there, staring at those four sterile walls that felt like an emotional prison. It was the second time I'd found myself in this place. I had just carried another baby to term and delivered him in the presence of family, doctors and nurses. This was a moment most mothers dream of and cherish long after their delivery experience, but there was no joy for me. I knew I had a limited amount of time with my son and would have to say goodbye—again.

I would leave the hospital empty-handed, no beautiful newborn in my arms to bring home to meet his siblings for the first time. There would be no diapers, no feedings, no

milestone moments to record. For the second time in less than three years, I would leave that hospital with only the memory of my son's short life—the fleeting smell of his head, the touch of his fingers, the feel of his skin.

I had buried one son already. I didn't think I could bear having to do so again. The pain in my heart was so excruciating I felt numb. I knew I was being called to trust my Abba Father, but it was so hard. My heart was so broken. I didn't understand why God would allow this to happen to us not once but twice.

Where had I gone so wrong in my life? Where had we gone wrong? Why would God allow this to happen? I started to question everything—every decision and choice I had ever made leading up to that moment.

As a mother, I can't imagine any greater pain than losing a child. I was angry and felt a huge hole in my heart. The physical scars of giving birth would heal. The tear stains on my cheeks would eventually fade. But there would always be a missing piece. Our boys were not with us on earth. I could only look to heaven and know they were there as part of God's bigger plan.

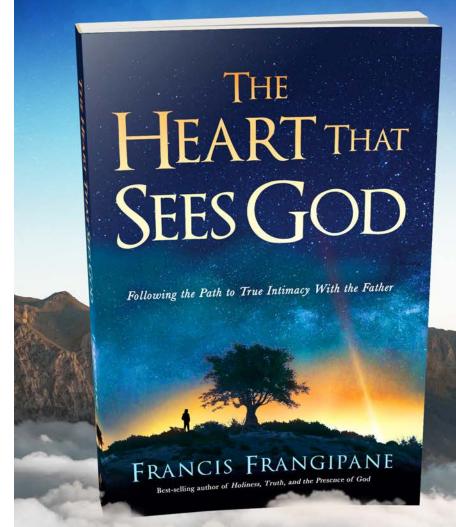
In my darkest moments I did the only thing I knew to do—I turned to God and His Word. I chose to trust Him, even when I was full of questions, pain and anger. The only thing that kept me going was believing that one day God would give me the family I always wanted and write my story just as I had envisioned it.

I would soon learn God had a plan already in motion that was much greater than my own. It wasn't until He helped me crawl out of the darkness and brokenness that I was able to begin to see it and realize I didn't get to control my story. I was simply called to trust the Lord with my whole heart.

Step by step and day by day life began to take shape. The pain of losing our boys didn't go away, but I began to see that while our children were not with us here on earth, their memory would live on through the mosaic God was crafting from all the What if everything you think you know about the

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ALLOWING **GOD TO WORK IN MY LIFE CREATED A** SPACE FOR HIM TO TURN MY **GREATEST PAIN** INTO MY LIFE'S **GREATEST** PURPOSE.



Life has many roads and brings many challenges. We all go through them. I never could have imagined what my challenges would look like or what I would have to walk through.

God is the master storyteller, and this is the story He wrote for me. It is my family's story and the story of Giving Hope, the ministry born from our experience. But this is also your story. I hope you look beyond your own pain, stop running from mistakes and realize God loves you and can use you through any situation. When you truly learn to embrace our heavenly Father's unconditional love, you can change your heart, your life and the world.

When my world fell apart, I realized life isn't promised to be perfect. God took the broken pieces and put them back together. From the depths of darkness came light. From the place of hurt came hope.

God changed me, constantly pushing me toward the person He wanted me to be—the mother, woman and wife He wanted me to be. Because of Him alone I can finish strong. I can do the work.

And there is still work to be done.

TRACY DUHON managed to turn her pain into purpose when she and her husband, Troy, formed the nonprofit Giving Hope, including the Food Pantry of New Orleans, Hope House Orphanages, Hope Against Trafficking and Hope for a Home. She also founded the Women of Hope Unite program, a faith-based women's organization. She and Troy, an executive producer of the record-breaking film God's Not Dead, have seven children four on earth (Josh, Abigail, Avah and Annastasia) and three in heaven—and live in New Orleans. Her new book, When Hope Is All You Have, released July 2nd, and is available to purchase now on Amazon.com.

broken pieces of our hearts.

Allowing God to work in my life created a space for Him to turn my greatest pain into my life's greatest purpose. I noticed the injustices happening around me. I began to see hurting people, and I wanted to meet them exactly where they were in their moment of need. I learned how to love extravagantly and give in a way I didn't know I was capable of until I had gone through my own suffering. Only God could have birthed that kind of love in me. After the pain I had experienced, I began to see the world through God's eyes rather than my own.

I thought losing my boys would be the end of life as I knew it. It was, in a way. My dream of motherhood took a very different form, but I came to know the joy and beauty of being able to change the lives of children, my own and so many others. I would get my miracle.

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THE DOG'S



NEW MERCIES, NEW MIRACLES & FRESH REDEMPTIONS

BY DUANE "DOG THE BOUNTY HUNTER" CHAPMAN

am Dog the Bounty Hunter. I will always be Dog the Bounty Hunter. Until the day I cannot physically chase down bad guys, you can be sure I will be out there on the hunt! In the last 40 years, I have chased down and caught more than 10,000 people, and that's a record I believe will stand. But these days, I am no longer going after bail jumpers. I don't get interested in chasing people unless they are felons and either the boys in blue or the Feds in black can't seem to track them down to bring them to justice.

I don't care where the chase leads me. I will hunt them down wherever they hide! I am especially motivated if the criminal on the run is accused of harming a woman or a child. When I hear about a crime like this, my inner warrior rises up, and I can't help it—I have to join the hunt to find him and take him down! I feel the cry of the innocent for justice.

It makes me remember the story of Cain and Abel in the Bible when Cain killed his brother in jealous anger. God asked Cain, "Where is your brother, Abel?" and he answered, "I don't know; I'm not his keeper." But God told him that his brother's blood cried out to Him from the ground. It's the same with me. It's as if the blood of the victim cries out to me from the ground. I must go.

Continuing the Mission

Because Beth was such an important part of my television success as Dog the Bounty Hunter and fans still have a deep connection to her, some have criticized or questioned whether I should continue bounty hunting with Francie as my wife. Some have even suggested it is time for me to hang up my badge, but I can't do that. I will always honor Beth's memory, and I am grateful for the life we had together. I still grieve her passing, as Francie does for Bob. As a widower and a widow, we will never forget the spouses we lost, but Francie married me as Duane "Dog" Chapman—Dog the Bounty Hunter. She knew when she said yes that hunting down bad guys to bring them to justice is an important part of who I am. It's in my blood.

This was confirmed shortly following our wedding. Within days of our ceremony, people started reaching out to me about the search for Brian Laundrie after the body of his fiancée, Gabby Petito, was found in the Grand Tetons and the case gained national attention. I am a father. I lost Barbara Katie when she was 23, so I had an immediate emotional connection with Gabby's parents.

I always say the bigger the case, the more information you have because people are curious. People want justice served, so they get invested and want the guy found.

We were on the first night of our honeymoon in Florida. After Francie was asleep, I got up and googled to find out how far Laundrie's family home was from where we were staying. I couldn't believe it—their house was only about a hundred miles from where we were staying!

I sat there staring at the screen, wrestling with my urge to go after Laundrie because I knew a honeymoon was about connecting with your spouse. For me, it is about spoiling your bride and making sure she has the time of her life and knows how excited you are to be with her. I didn't want to spoil our honeymoon by being distracted by the hunt for Brian Laundrie. I approached Francie cautiously, "Say, do you realize that our hotel is only a hundred miles from the house where Brian Laundrie's parents live?"

I had already decided if Francie was not intrigued or just wanted to go sit on the beach, then I would honor her and stay out

of the hunt until after our honeymoon was over. We had chosen Florida because Francie wanted to play in the ocean and put her feet in the sand. But she surprised me. She got this twinkle in her eyes, broke into a big smile and said, "Honey, do you want to go there?"

"So bad," I answered.

"OK, let's go tomorrow." God, I love that woman!

"The Knock Heard 'Round the World"

We took a road trip just to do a drive-by of the house and neighborhood. I wanted to get the lay of the land. Sometimes when I see a place, I hear God talk to me about the person, and He gives me something—a clue—that helps me locate them.

I don't mind telling you that I was a little worried about confronting Laundrie's father. You could see from press interviews that he was aggravated and on edge. Florida has a Stand Your Ground law that allows you to shoot someone in self-defense. So if I approached Mr. Laundrie at his home and he perceived I was a threat, according to the state of Florida, he could shoot me without legal repercussions.

Francie and I had been married only a short time, and I was in no hurry to exit earth, but I felt like I had to prove to my new wife that I was a brave man. If he shoots me, I rationalized, at least Francie will see me go down in a blaze of glory!

When we found the neighborhood, I could see reporters everywhere. We drove past the house a few times, and on my third trip around the block, a cop waved me over.

"Hello, Officer," I said, rolling down my window. "How are you?"

"Hey! You're Dog the Bounty Hunter!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir, I am. I've been driving around this neighborhood thinking about Brian Laundrie. That's his parents' house, right? I would really like to go up there and knock on the door."

"Well, when do you want to go?" he asked.

"Right now," I bluffed. I expected

him to tell me I couldn't. With so many reporters around, I was sure there had to be an injunction against the press bothering them for interviews or something, but I didn't want to let Francie down.

"Hang on," he said, "let me pull my officers off the door first."

"What?" I answered, surprised. "Oh no, that's OK..."

"Yeah, yeah! Let's go up there!" Francie shouted.

"Honey, reporters are crawling all over the place. If Laundrie is in there, he is not coming out, and his family is certainly not going to let me in!" I protested. "I probably need to scout the area more so I can come up with a plan. Maybe we should come back later when they let their guard down."

"Well, we drove all this way. Aren't you at least gonna knock?" she asked. She had that look in her eyes, which I already knew meant I was going to go knock on that door. We parked, and I walked up the driveway and approached the front door.

"That's Dog the Bounty Hunter!" I could hear reporters shouting.

This is nuts, I thought as I approached the front entrance. He could still shoot me. The house had one of those metal storm doors with a screen that you could keep shut while the main door was open so you could let in a breeze. I banged loudly. My signature knock.

No answer.

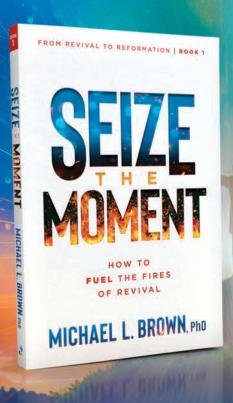
I walked around and then banged again.

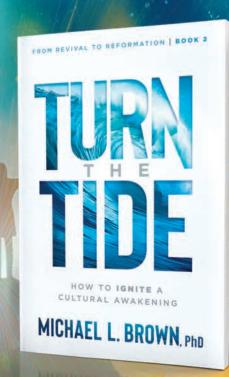


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caught on camera. You will find video footage all over the internet from several major news outlets that captured me walking up to the Laundries' house, banging on the door (without any answer) and talking to the neighbors across the fence.

I felt in my gut the parents knew where their son was. Whether they wanted to talk to me or not, I could just feel that Laundrie was close.

"He's near," I told Francie as I slid back into the car. "That boy slunk back home with his tail between his legs, and I'm going to find him for Gabby's parents—for Gabby!"

As we drove off, I said, "Well, Dog the Bounty Hunter knocking on his door is going to rain down attention on this family. This thing just got lit up!"

That evening when we got back, I started researching the case more. I found an article titled "The Knock Heard Around the World." I was so proud of that! I knew that my interest and involvement meant national media attention would swell. That was good for the case because the more media coverage, the more average citizens would be on the lookout and have valuable information.

Our tip line got thousands of calls. I had put together a team I call "The Essentials," made up of retired law enforcement officers and federal agents still in their prime whose wisdom and experience are too good to waste.

Adapted from Nine Lives and Counting: A Bounty Hunter's Journey to Faith, Hope, and Redemption © 2024 by Dog TBH Corporation. Published by Thomas Nelson.

DUANE LEE CHAPMAN, also known as "Dog the Bounty Hunter," is an American TV personality known for popular programs that follow his life and adventures as a bounty hunter. Dog is deeply involved in crime fighting and advocating for tougher legislation to curb crime. He is launching several media ventures, including a new TV show and podcast, and is a New York Times bestselling author of two previous books. Dog operates Light Up the Darkness ministry with his wife, Francie, whom he married in 2021. They reside in Florida.

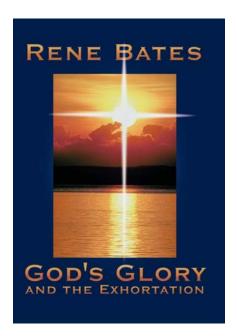
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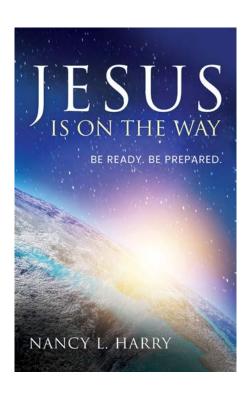
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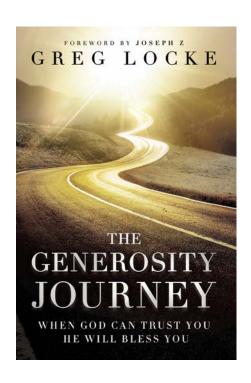
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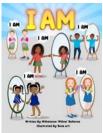
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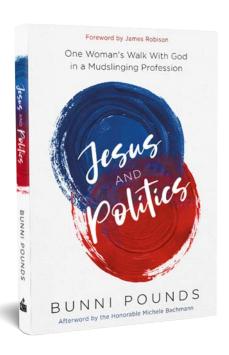
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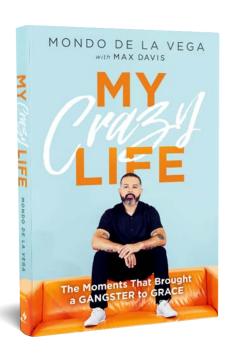
Refresh Your Spirit Summer Reading Guide



Jesus and Politics by Bunni Pounds

The Christian life isn't about doing things the easy way—it's about living as Christ even in a hostile environment. With Bunni Pounds' Jesus and Politics, you will gain insight from Pounds' sixteen-year career in the political atmosphere on how you can disciple a nation one heart at a time. Christians don't have to sit on the sidelines while we see a crumbling world around us, even in the political realm—we can be a light in the darkness to all people, in all situations.

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My Crazy Life by Mondo De La Vega

If Jesus can change the life of a gangster, what could He do with you? In Mondo De La Vega's My Crazy Life, your readers will step into a world where respect, power, and money lure a young man into the dark embrace of one of Los Angeles' most notorious Latino gangs. Discover De La Vega's remarkable journey as God interrupts his destructive path with His relentless love and grace. By the end of this book, your readers will find the strength to leave behind their old, sinful ways and embrace a new, fulfilling life in Jesus Christ.

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The Serpent and the Soul by Katie Souza

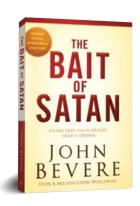
Deadly serpent spirits are seeking to destroy your soul! Katie Souza's *The Serpent and the Soul* reveals the sly strategies of Python, Leviathan, and other demonic spirits, as they attempt to attack you at all levels: *financially, physically*, and *spiritually*. Working against our relationships, our faith, and our future, these serpent spirits want to constrict you so that you suffer like they will in eternity. But have no fear! In Luke 10:19, Jesus gave us the power to trample serpents and have authority over the enemy. Although the serpent spirits may seem intimidating at first, they will run away as soon as you take back what they have stolen from you. Using the powerful prayers and spiritual tools inside this practical guide, you will be able to break free from the serpents' deadly grip and restore peace in your life! Likewise, you will be able to see that your life was created for *wholeness*, not *brokenness*.

Serpent

Seliverance From Strangling Spirits

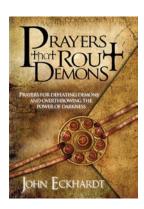
Satur Souga

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The Bait of Satan by John Bevere

Most people who are ensnared by the bait of Satan don't even realize it. With John Bevere's classic, best-selling book, you will learn how to identify the traps lying in the path ahead of you to escape from a victim mentality. Examining declaration-style prayers and testimonials, you'll discover what it looks like to stay free from offense and its destructive power. You'll uncover the answers to questions like: Why am I compelled to tell "my side" of the story? and how can I regain trust after someone deeply offends me? Start your journey of freedom today!



Prayers that Rout Demons by John Eckhardt

Powerful warfare prayers can strike fear in any demonic spirit. John Eckhardt's *Prayers that Rout Demons* deep dives into Scripture, proving that our prayers can break demonic powers, overcome demonic influence, and resist the devil's daily temptations. After reading this book, you will know how to release the fire of the living God to preach, prophesy, heal the sick, cast out demons, break curses, and mend relationships. When you pray specific prayers, you will be able to defeat demons and overthrow the powers of darkness and release the blessings and favor of God like a flood.

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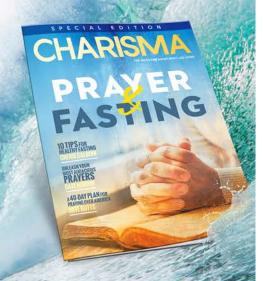
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BIBLE READING GUIDE

Follow our daily reading plan in each issue of *Charisma Magazine Online* to read through the Modern English Version Bible in one year. The plan is also available online at *mycharisma.com/bible-reading-guide/*.

"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." —John 8:32

JULY

July 1	ls. 1-3; Titus 3
July 2	ls. 4-5; Ps. 115-116; Jude
July 3	ls. 6-7; 2 Chr. 26-27; Philemon
July 4	2 Kin. 15-16; Hos. 1; Heb. 1
July 5	Hos. 2-5; Heb. 2
July 6	Hos. 6-9; Heb. 3
July 7	Hos. 10-12; Ps. 73; Heb. 4
July 8	Hos. 13-14; Ps. 100,102; Heb. 5
July 9	Mic. 1-4; Heb. 6
July 10	Mic. 5-7; Heb. 7
July 11	ls. 8-10; Heb. 8
July 12	ls. 11-14; Heb. 9
July 13	ls. 15-18; Heb. 10
July 14	ls. 19-21; Heb. 11
July 15	ls. 22-24; Heb. 12
July 16	ls. 25-28; Heb. 13
July 17	ls. 29-31; James 1
July 18	ls. 32-35; James 2
July 19	2 Kin. 17; 2 Chr. 28; Ps. 46; Jms 3
July 20	2 Chr. 29-31; James 4
July 21	2 Kin. 18-19; 2 Chr. 32; James 5
July 22	ls. 36-37; Ps. 76; 1 Pet. 1
July 23	2 Kin. 20; Is. 38-39; Ps. 75; 1 Pet. 2
July 24	ls. 40-42; 1 Pet. 3
July 25	Is. 43-45;1Pet. 4
July 26	ls. 46-49; 1 Pet. 5
July 27	Is. 50-52; Ps. 92; 2 Pet. 1
July 28	ls. 53-56; 2 Pet. 2
July 29	ls. 57-59; Ps. 103; 2 Pet. 3
July 30	ls. 60-62; John 1
July 31	ls. 63-64; Ps. 107; John 2

Eight-Time New York Times Best-Selling Author

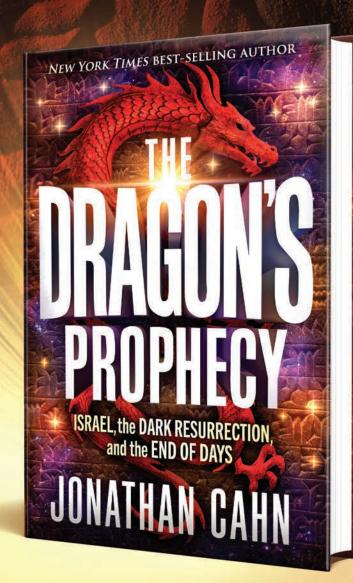
JONATHAN GARN

is Releasing the Next Great PROPHECY Coming to Our World...

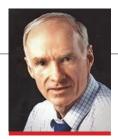
IT IS POSSIBLE that what we see taking place at the end of the age is the answer to ancient revelation—and that we now are seeing it unfold? In Jonathan Cahn's latest, explosive release, *The Dragon's Prophecy*, he is unveiling the revelations behind the ancient mysteries to questions like:

- Is there more to this world than meets our eyes?
- Is there an ancient vision that reveals what is now taking place in our world?
- Is there an ancient prophecy that tells us what the future holds?

And many, many more!







Hotheads In the Household (November 1985)

"Any behavior which

undermines the

foundations of the

Christian home is

never heard my father and mother argue. I know they often disagreed, but they considered it bad breeding to argue in front of their children. It was an unreal world for a kid to

There was one time... I was about 10 years old. I woke up in the middle of the night and heard my mother screaming. My older brother, Walter, Jr., had come in late from a Saturday night date. My mother met him downstairs, and there was some kind of horrible confrontation.

My mother was hysterical. Then I heard Walter shouting something, also unintelligible. The door slammed, shaking the entire house. By that time I was out of bed. From my upstairs window I saw my brother stomping across the dark yard toward nowhere, shouting back at the house. My mother, back upstairs, was still hysterical.

I was terrified and crawled back into bed, wishing it had never happened; through the closed bedroom door I could hear my father's calming voice: "Now, now, he'll be back."

The next morning we all gathered as usual at the breakfast table before leaving for Sunday school. Each child, including Walter Jr., was present. Mother was bringing in the Cream of Wheat in the big brown serving bowl with the blue stripe

around the top. My father, sitting at the head of the table in coat and tie, had us bow for the blessing. No mention was made of the eruption of the night before. In our family, children were never exposed to their parents' flaws.

My children, unfortunately, were not raised in this kind of artificiality. When Jackie and I argued it seemed to be in front of everyone. That was not the way I would have chosen. I prefer to think of myself as an aristocrat rather than a common brawler. But for some reason nothing in our house was private. When it came to our frequent, and sometimes explosive, disagreements, well, everyone knew everything.

My father (and my mother, except for that outburst with Walter Jr.) regarded unbridled emotion of any kind as bad form. It was suggestive of a lack of Christian restraint. My wife, on the other hand, is one who believed in total exposure. No waiting until the children were asleep. No smiling nicely until we were behind closed doors. Whenever I, by some unacceptable behavior, pushed her over her narrow threshold into the pit of frustration, she simply exploded.

Earlier in our marriage I was horrified by these outbursts. I wanted my children to think I was perfect. Husbands and wives who shouted at each other in front of their offspring were, in my opinion, products of low breeding. Whenever I found myself in one of these domestic disagreements—and knew the children were listening that old terror returned. It was the same feeling I had the night I heard my mother screaming at my brother.

But Jackie did not bring these same fears into our marriage. She had not been raised in a home where domestic disagreements were hidden, where children were lied to by well-meaning parents who attempted to shield them from reality. She was raised in a four-room

> house occupied by seven people from three generations. Family squabbles involved everyone. She did not fear reality. She knew love would conquer in the end.

> Don't misunderstand. I'm not saying it's good for parents to fight in front of their children. Some restraint is good. Any behavior which undermines the foundations of the Christian home is simply unacceptable.

> Across the years, thanks to our growing relationship with God, our household

has become more peaceful. We simply don't fight as we used to. Love, joy, peace, gentleness... these have replaced sharp words and

Our arguments did have one redeeming feature: once the storm had passed, we knew God required that we make an explanation to our children. It was not unusual to wind up asking the children to pray for us. Thus, our children have not harbored false expectations about their parents or about marriage.

The five children, now grown and married, often get together at our house for a meal. When they do, the conversation invariably drifts to, "Hey, remember that time Mom..." and "Yeah, and what about the time Dad..." This will be followed by hilarious laughter as they explain to their spouses our flaws and faults.

It's embarrassing. But when I hear their laughter and see my wife wink at me, I, too, smile—and give thanks.

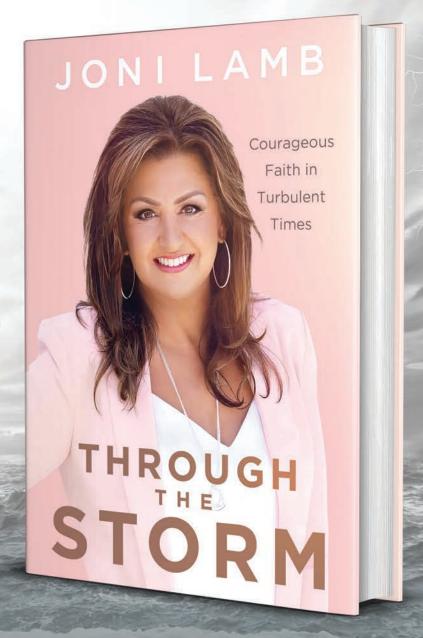
simply unacceptable." argumentative spirits. We've learned to listen.

Jamie Buckingham wrote 153 columns for Charisma over 13 years, first known as "Dry Bones" but later as it's most recognized "Last Word." His singular voice was animated by a heart for Jesus baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit in 1967 at a Full Gospel Businessmen's convention. Buckingham provided a steadying force during the scandals of the 1980s, penning the seminal article on the PTL scandal, "God Is Shaking His Church" in May 1986.

What if the most beautiful kind of **faith** is the type that has been tested and tried?

As the visionary and cofounder of Daystar Television Network, Joni Lamb has had a remarkable journey. In her new book, *Through the Storm*, Joni candidly opens up about the relentless challenges she's overcome of establishing and growing the network to the personal struggles she's faced. But even in the midst of each obstacle, she unwaveringly sought the Lord to find rest in His goodness and mercy.

Discover how you can have this same resilience and redemption present in your own life and testimony!



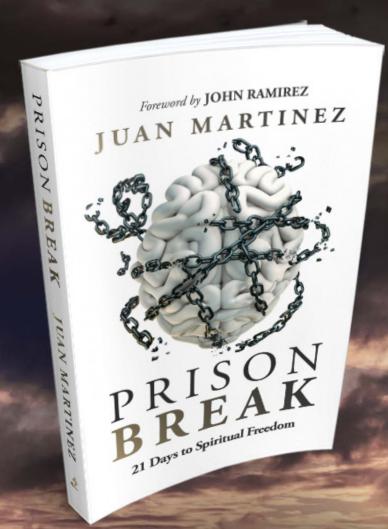


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