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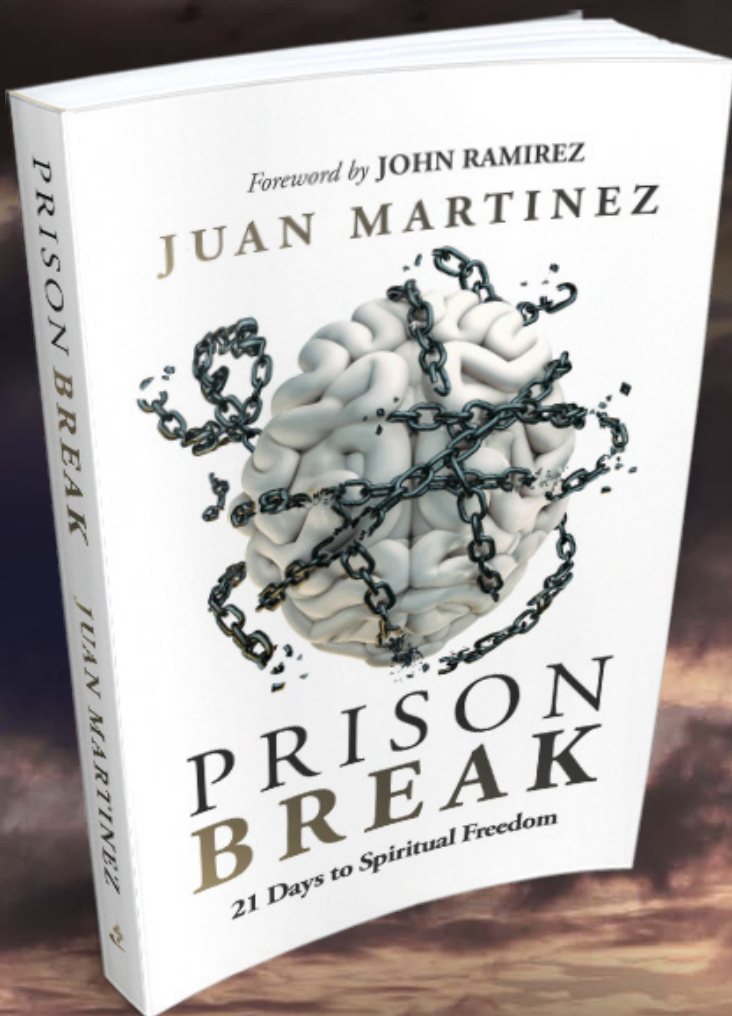
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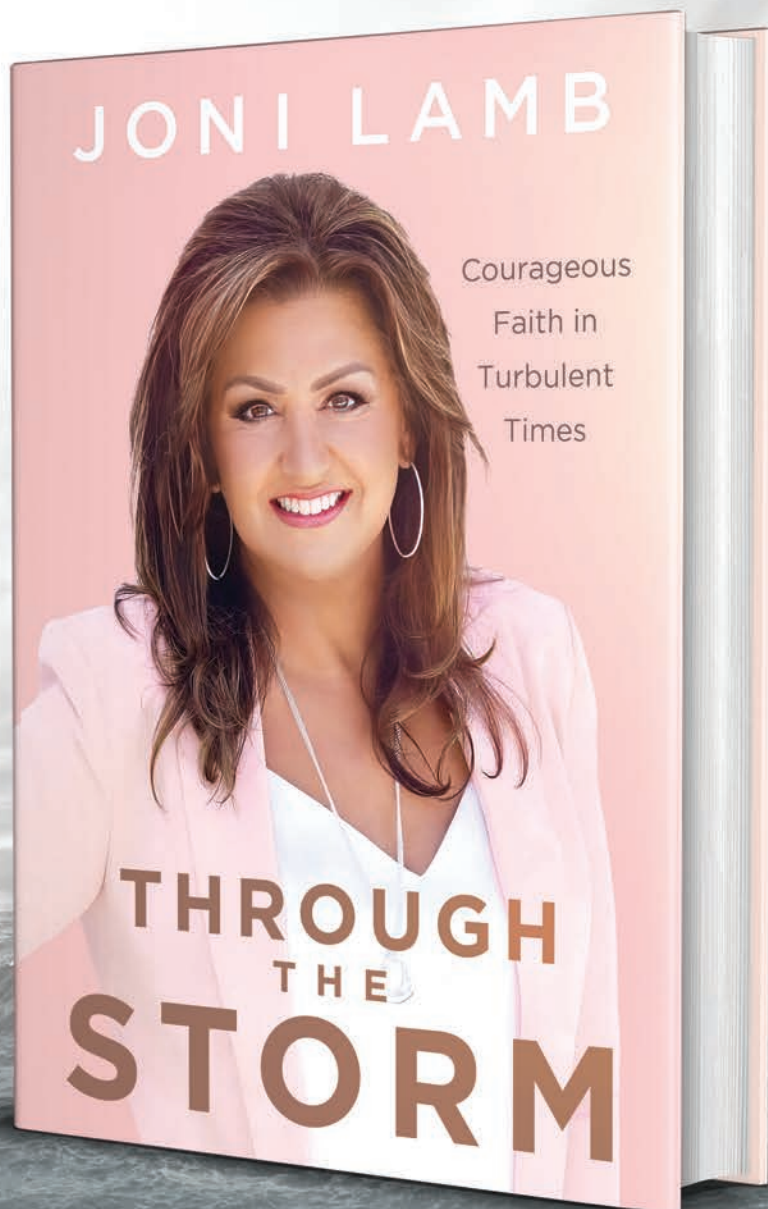
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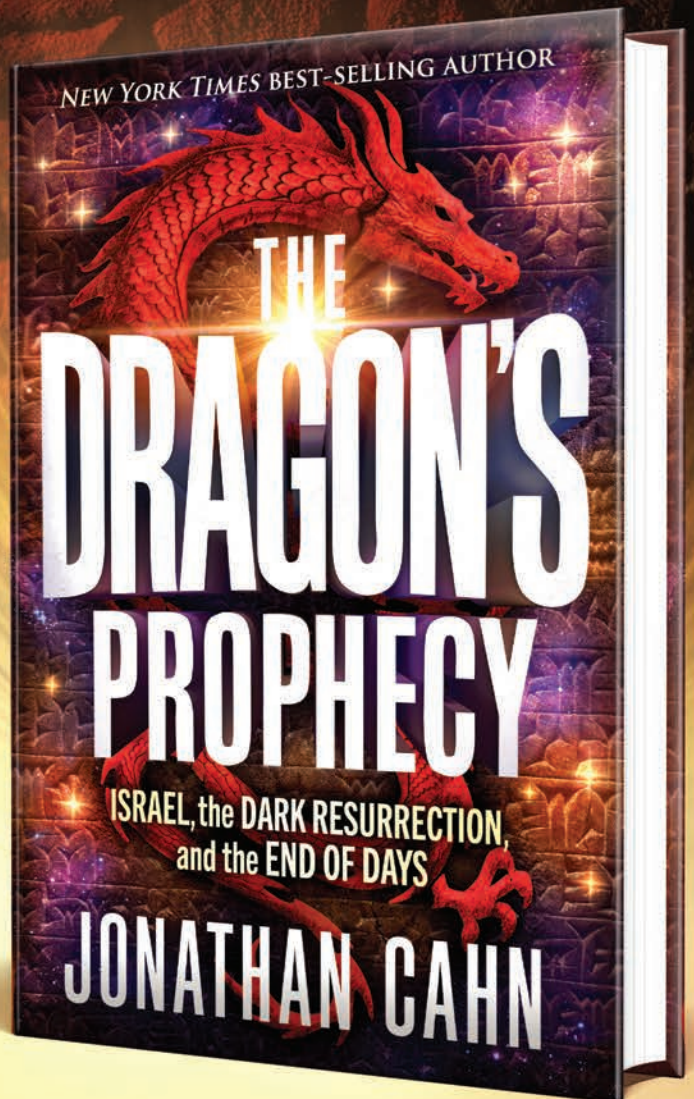
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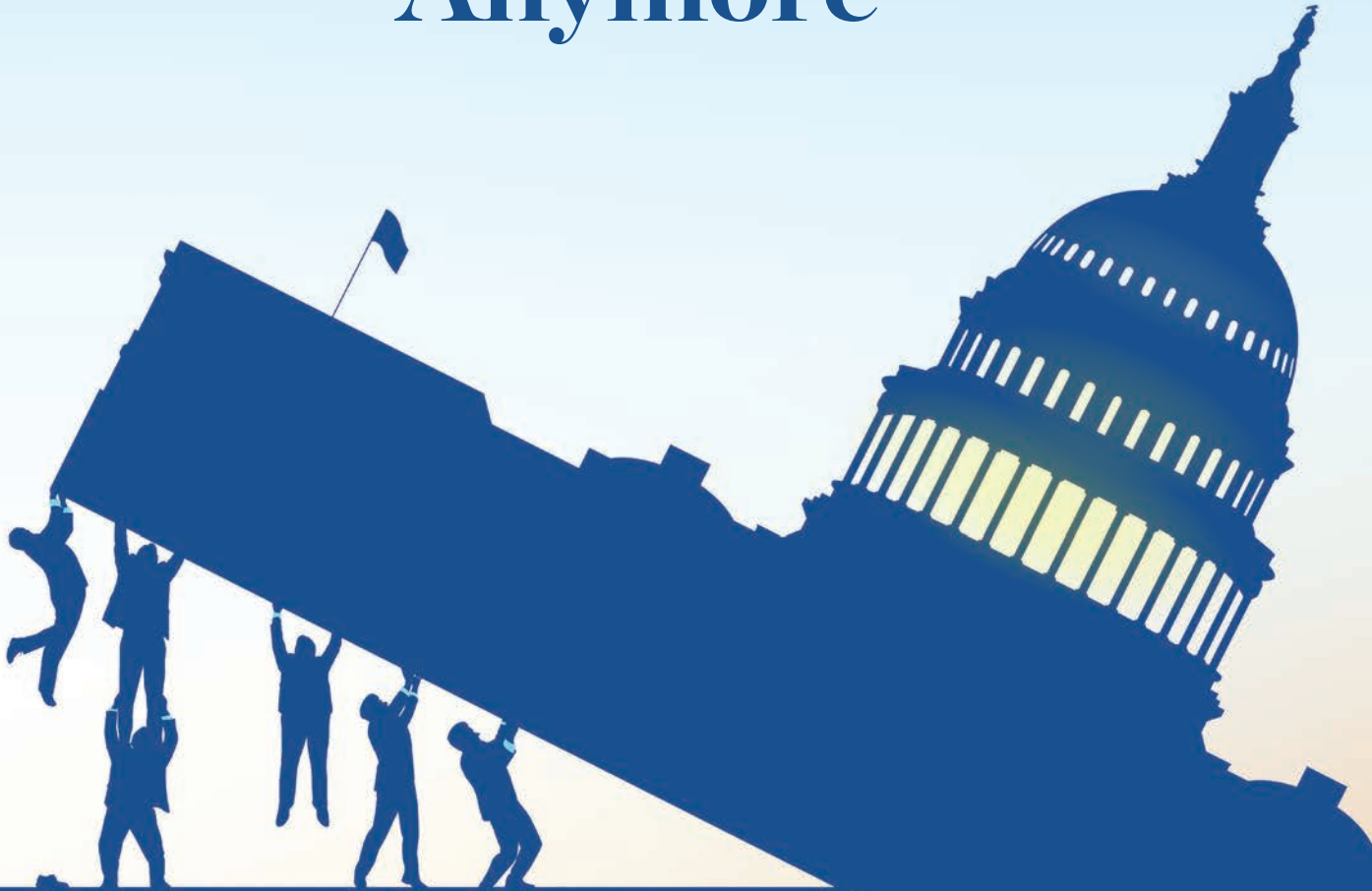
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There Is No Room for Political Complacency Anymore



**Why “I don’t get involved
in politics” is no longer an
acceptable position for
committed Christians**

BY TERRI HASDORFF

Have you ever experienced a life-changing moment? A moment when you knew you would never look at the world the same? Or maybe it was a moment of insight that would forever eliminate your automatic, learned responses? For me, that moment came while visiting Kenya in 2007. After starting a new job with the U.S. Agency for International Development, Convoy of Hope invited me to tour a part of Nairobi called the Mathare Valley.

Everywhere I looked, I saw orphans. Children who had lost their parents to HIV/AIDS scrounged through the garbage dumps searching for food. Most of the homes, if you can call them that, were mere shacks with mud walls and tin roofs. There was no electricity, no running water and no sewage system. It was so dangerous there and the poverty was so extreme that the police and the fire department would not respond if called. It was truly one of the closest things to a man-made hell I have ever seen on earth.

Our African guide, Rev. Peter Nuthu, had been the pastor of a large church in a wealthier part of Nairobi; then one day, he and his wife visited Mathare. His wife encouraged him to start a one-day-a-week feeding program for the children there. Quickly, they realized that this food was the only real meal many of the children had all week! So Rev. Nuthu and his wife gave up their nice home and church in the better part of town and moved their ministry to the edge of Mathare.

As we stood in the courtyard inside the gates, the reverend explained that we were going to a dangerous place because the people there were so desperate. We were instructed to leave any of our jewelry behind and to tuck our cameras inside our jackets. Then six strapping young men armed with billy clubs surrounded us



Terri Hasdorff

to provide protection. As Rev. Nuthu led us outside the safety of his compound through a back gate, I felt like I was walking through a portal into another world.

From Avoidance to Action

As we walked deeper into the valley, the sights, smells and sounds of human suffering were the most tragic I have ever witnessed or could have even imagined before my visit. Rev. Nuthu led us deeper and deeper until we reached a fetid mountain, a 50-foot-high accumulation of garbage, excrement and death that had been building for years. I stopped in my tracks as he started leading everyone to climb up that enormous mountain of garbage. I hung back with one of my staff members and decided to stay behind until the rest of the group returned. I did not want to go farther up because it looked so unpleasant and possibly unsafe, but Rev. Nuthu noticed I was not with them and turned back around to get me. With an almost desperate look in his eyes, he took my hand and said, “Please, come with me; I need to show you something.” I mustered the courage and followed him.

We climbed for several minutes and were about

halfway up when he stopped and suddenly pointed to something at his feet—a pile of rotting goat intestines that were turning black and were covered in flies. The smell made me nauseous. It was simply disgusting to even look at them. I stared at the reverend with complete bewilderment. He could see that I didn't understand why he was showing me this, so he looked into my eyes, pointed again with great fervor, and said, "This is what they eat!" I stared at him in disbelief. He said it again. "If we don't feed them, this is what the children will come and eat." My mind began to race as I understood the unbelievable horror and gravity of what he was explaining.

My instinct was to run as fast as I could from this place. Run back to my hotel, with its hot water and a bed with nice clean sheets, and then back onto the plane home. But my feet were lead, my heart was heavy and my eyes held back tears, for that was the moment—the moment that I knew inaction was no longer an option. To shake my head and offer my meager prayers would never be enough. I knew that, just like Rev. Nuthu, I had to get involved and personally help make a difference.

Now, reflecting on that experience years later, that is exactly how I feel about the current state of American politics. While the political facade in America may not be as jolting as a slum in Africa, the reality is much more fetid than most Americans know.

From Africa to American Politics

When I returned to my hotel room that night after visiting Mathare, I reflected on something that had moved me deeply when I stood next to that huge mountain of garbage in one of the worst slums in the world—and it has stayed with me ever since. In the heart of that desperate place, the *only* people I saw responding to the needs were Christians. When I looked around, I didn't see any movie stars speaking out about the injustices. I didn't see anyone from the local media. One thing stood out in a place

where even the fire department and the police wouldn't respond to cries for help. The people I *did* see there, helping those in need day in and day out, were true people of faith who weren't afraid to get involved.

I was raised in the church, and my career path is the result of continual prayer and a desire to serve. Having worked as a major gifts officer for more than one large Christian nonprofit, I have come to know personally several high-net-worth individuals, many of them deeply committed Christians. In early 2019, I attended a fundraising dinner at a beautiful hotel in downtown Washington, D.C. In an elegant ballroom, I sat next to a man and his wife who have a personal net worth greater than the gross domestic product of most third world countries. The husband spent a large part of the evening lamenting to me about the state of the country, telling me at length how worried he was for his grandchildren and how he wished we could have better people in leadership.

I had no idea that night that less than six months later, God would make it clear to me, after a great deal of prayer and fasting, that I was to run for Congress. For some time, I had held the dream of serving in public office, and suddenly an opportunity to do just that arose. Unexpectedly, a seat was about to be vacated that had previously looked like it would remain occupied for a long time. For me, the decision came down to a question of obedience to God. I didn't know if I was supposed to win; I just knew I was supposed to run.

I filed the paperwork and hired a team of consultants and was told that if I had any hope of winning, I needed to raise at least \$750,000. That amount seemed overwhelming, but because I know so many strong Christians who care deeply about the country, I firmly believed that with their help, I could raise the amount needed to be successful.

Serious questions existed about the integrity of my main opponents, and thousands of dollars were being poured into their races. The consultants believed that I had a good shot

at winning if I could raise enough money to let people know they had a solid, honest alternative who would stand up for faith and family values. I had spent years working on Capitol Hill as a legislative staffer, and I knew how to get things done in Washington. My great desire was to put my knowledge and experience to work to help the people I would represent. But if the voters didn't even know who I was, none of that would matter.

From Inaction to Involvement

I called the man I'd had the honor of having dinner with just a few months earlier. After excitedly explaining to him what God was leading me to do, I asked him if he and his wife would donate some of the critical funds I needed to have a real fighting chance at winning. After all, I was a Christian like him. I was highly trained, shared his values, and he and his wife knew me personally.

I almost dropped the phone when he said, "Terri, I'm sorry, but I'm not going to be able to help you. My wife and I decided a long time ago that we just don't get involved in politics. We only give our money to Christian nonprofits. We don't give money to political campaigns."

I felt my knees buckle as I weakly stammered out a thank you for his time and hung up the phone. I couldn't believe it.

I am disappointed to say that over and over, people told me, "I'm sorry; we just don't get involved in politics." This came from *strong Christians*—friends, colleagues and people from church or Bible study groups. Many of them said things like, "Politics is just so nasty," "Everyone is so corrupt" and "You really can't change the system." And on the criticisms went. When I looked back at the end of my race, only a few solid, committed people had stepped up and said yes. Their friendship and support meant everything to me and still does. It mattered to them because they *got it*. In their minds, they were investing in the kingdom and in me. That was the paradigm shift.

I was determined to not let them



Running Into the Fire

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down. I gave my race everything I had. My team and I left it all on the field, but unfortunately, I did not win. My opponents outspent me by hundreds of thousands of dollars, and as my consultants explained, it was a numbers game. If you don't have the money, you are almost guaranteed not to win.

After my race ended and I had some time to reflect on what happened, I was truly the most aggrieved by how incredibly hard it is for anyone to get elected who is not willing to take money from special interests. Our system seems to be slanted more and more toward candidates who are willing to compromise heavily to get money. In addition, if you have a very short lead time to raise money, as I did, how can you possibly compete with someone who can bring in millions of dollars?

Unless you have a major force behind you, such as a huge amount of grassroots support or many people willing to donate, fundraise and personally get involved in other ways, it's not possible.

And that major force is what I believe God wants to stir up through the body of Christ.

The same way that Rev. Nuthu and his wife realized they could not ignore the truth and do nothing, you as well will realize that you must get involved. Inaction is no longer an option. Your life and the lives of your children depend on it. If our nation continues to consume the garbage that is the fruit of corruption, selfishness and bad decision-making because we sit back and do nothing, our country will die.

As James 2:20b says, "Faith without works is dead." Putting that faith into action is powerful. I want to help you see that you have power, a power you may not realize, to change the world, starting with your city or hometown and spreading throughout the rest of your country. Our country. One nation under God.

As Christians, we are personally responsible for government at the local, state and federal levels. If we don't like what we see, it's our job to change it.

Authentic Christians have divorced themselves from politics and government for far too long out of fear, apathy or ignorance. We must be educated regarding what the Bible says about our involvement in government and then train and support others who want to make a difference.

You simply don't have the luxury of merely voting at the ballot box anymore. You also need to vote with your wallet, time, influence and personal involvement. ◀

TERRI HASDORFF is a former congressional candidate and is an executive-level leader. She served on Capitol Hill for six years, then ran for the U.S. House to represent Alabama's second district. She has a bachelor's degree from Samford University, is a graduate of the senior executives program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and is currently in the executive MBA program at Oxford University. Her recent new book, *Running Into the Fire: Why More Christians Need to be Involved in Politics*, is available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Why Most Charismatics Will Vote for Donald Trump

It's time to step up and decide between America's two opposing futures about religious freedom and many more issues

BY STEPHEN STRANG

When Pastor Paula White-Cain walked to the podium in Amway Center in Orlando, Florida, on June 18, 2019, the stands were filling up, and the crowd was teeming with excitement, though it would be another two hours before President Trump would announce he was running for reelection.

She quoted President Trump as saying, “We worship God, not government,” as a segue into her prayer. After invoking the name of Jesus and thanking God for the “great United States,” the president and God’s blessings, she prayed, “Father, You have raised President Trump up for such a time as this,” and invoked blessings from Psalms and the book of Daniel about revealing “the secrets and the deep things” to the president. Then she began to come against “principalities and powers”—terminology rarely heard or understood outside the walls of a charismatic or Pentecostal church.

“Let every evil veil of deception of the enemy be removed from people’s eyes in the name which is above every name, the name of Jesus Christ,” she prayed. “You said in Your Word... in Ephesians 6:12, that “We are not wrestling against flesh and blood but against principalities, powers, against rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

The respected charismatic teacher Dutch Sheets who watched the rally via livestream told me: “I have never seen anything like that on TV. I literally sat there with my mouth hanging open. I couldn’t believe she had the boldness to do that or was allowed to do it. It was as if she drew a line in the sand spiritually.”

Light versus darkness. Good versus evil. God’s plan versus the enemy’s destructive agenda. The Spirit-breathed plans of

God versus the enemy’s deceitful agenda.

This binary worldview, held by virtually all Spirit-filled Christians, played a major role in electing Donald J. Trump as president in 2016. Now, four years later, the spiritual battle lines have been drawn, and the stakes are even higher.

We live in a time where anarchists in some cities have been running amok for weeks on end, assaulting police officers and setting fire to federal buildings. The COVID-19 threat continues, and one of the strongest economies since World War II was sucker punched by the novel coronavirus from China, leaving over 16 million Americans out of work this summer.

Toss a presidential election year into the mix, and small wonder charismatic and Pentecostal believers are on their knees praying for revelation over how they should respond.

To understand the charismatic support for President Trump, you need to flash back to 2011. You probably have never heard that story, unless you’ve read my recent books *God, Trump, and the 2020 Election* and *God, Trump, and COVID-19*.

The story begins like this: Trump the real-estate and entertainment mogul called Paula White-Cain, who he had come to consider a “spiritual adviser,” to say he was thinking about running for president. He asked her to bring together several leading preachers to pray over whether he should toss his hat in the ring in 2012 for the presidency.

Evangelist Kenneth Copeland told me later: “They prayed for over six hours—just stayed on their knees before God for six hours.” The verdict from the group was that the time wasn’t right. Who knows if that factored into his decision not to run in 2012? But four years later, Trump called together the same group of praying pastors who became an early version of his evangelical advisory group.

continued »



President Donald J. Trump applauds the crowd as he is introduced at the White House Summit on Transforming Mental Health Treatment in December 2019.





President Trump participates in prayer with African American leaders and Pastor Paula White-Cain on Feb. 27, 2020, in the White House Cabinet Room.

Copeland told me, “This is the Donald Trump people don’t know anything about.” It’s a candidate who seemed to enjoy being prayed for and values input from Christian leaders. Often someone would take a picture or a video on their cellphone, and it would go viral. This was before Trump began to get traction as a candidate and when most “evangelicals” were still supporting several candidates with better bona fide “evangelical credentials” such as Gov. Mike Huckabee or Gov. Bobby Jindal. Even Sen. Mark Rubio and Sen. Ted Cruz are the type of candidates evangelicals could point to and say: “He’s one of us.”

But Trump was anything but “one of us.” For years, he was well-known as a New York playboy and TV celebrity. Plus he had too many wives, an un-presidential style and involvement in casinos. Mainstream media commentators label any Christian who supports Trump a hypocrite because, of course, Christians don’t approve of such things.

It’s a curious double standard:

Left-leaning politicians face virtually no litmus test on traditional moral issues, while social conservatives are told they should abandon their candidate if they fall short of being a saint.

However, something curious began to happen. These charismatic leaders saw the problems in America as deeper than policy issues such as if there is too much debt or whether we spend enough on education or the military or the infrastructure. Those may be important issues but are not at the core of the problems in America.

Over the years, “evangelical leaders” were invited to sit at the table of mostly Republican presidents. They were promised that issues important to conservative Christians would be championed, but little happened. Charismatics and Pentecostals were rarely seen in those invited “to the table” with so-called evangelical leaders.

Maybe because charismatics have always felt out of the mainstream, they were drawn to a candidate out of the mainstream who actually seemed to welcome them and was open to be prayed

for. And several began to sense that maybe this unlikely candidate was being raised up by God.

Also, because we believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to change lives, when we began to hear that Donald Trump was open spiritually, we began to believe maybe God could raise him up, flaws and all.

The Bible, of course, is replete with examples of imperfect, flawed leaders whom God raised up to serve—a point I make in my book *God, Trump, and the 2020 Election*. No, a puritan morality isn’t a fair test of a president’s integrity. The real fitness test of a political leader is whether they fulfill or renege on the campaign promises that got them elected.

By that standard, the inside-the-Beltway political establishments of both parties have failed. For a generation, they have dangled bright shiny promises before the eyes of the electorate without actually accomplishing much.

In the 2016 election, the alternative to Trump was Hillary Clinton, who was on the wrong side of every issue important to conservative Christians, not just



“Our problem is not Donald Trump; our problem is us.”

gains strength as never before, I believe we must light a fire under the Christian community to turn out the vote. Otherwise, I fear life as we’ve known it in America may end, and the persecution of Christians and others who oppose the Leftist agenda will begin.

Trump and COVID-19

In the eyes of the Left and the media, the Trump administration has done nothing right in its battle against this modern-day plague that originated in Wuhan, China. Indeed, the same week Democrats were trying to impeach him, he banned travel from China. As late as Jan. 14, the Chinese were still saying the disease could not be transmitted from human to human.

Trump’s bold decision incensed the entrenched establishment forces determined to cancel his presidency. Activists on the Left screamed that he was “xenophobic.” The truth is, the president’s quick action implementing the travel ban from China on Jan. 31, and then from Europe in mid-March, probably saved thousands of lives.

Once the wisdom of Trump’s decision was clear, the Left began trashing him by insisting he did too little too late to counter the virus. My own theory is that those on the Left want to drag this out as long as they could, hoping the economy is so bad that something weird may happen and their weak and ill-equipped candidate Joe Biden may slip into office on Election Day. They have such a deep lust for power that they’d rather have the economy screech to a halt, leaving millions to file for unemployment, if that’s what it takes to win in November.

Perhaps the Left fears a second Trump term would restore citizens’ faith in the American dream, and that protecting our God-given freedoms remains the key to our prosperity.

The Spiritual Battle

Some saw the 2016 election results, and the events that followed, as a political revolution. Many Spirit-filled conservative Christians, however, saw it as a cultural counter-revolution and an answer to prayer.

Evangelist James Robison told me that in 2016, “a lot of Christians were praying that we wouldn’t lose freedom, that we would not lose the opportunities this nation offers with the protections and safeguards and government functioning as a protector, and not potentially replacing God and our love for one another.

Secular pundits saw Trump’s victory only as a battle between Democrat and Republican, or between the Left and the Right. But Robison saw it as a supernatural spiritual battle—as I do.

“What happened,” he told me, “is that God overpowered the foolishness of political correctness and the liberal (not just deceived but possessed) Left, which is far too often dead-set against a biblical worldview and against America’s traditional Judeo-Christian ethics. But they were being totally pushed back.”

Trump’s win served as evidence to believers that their prayers were being answered. We Christians believe this pandemic did not catch God by surprise. We believe He hears and answers prayer. I personally believe He gave us our president for such a time as this.

President Trump’s foes are relentless, and they attempt to wear down anyone who supports him. One example is Trump’s battle to get hydroxychloroquine into the hands of doctors on the front lines. According to some studies and many doctors, the drug has been quite effective.

For me, the stakes in this year’s election became crystal clear on Monday, March 30, when my longtime friend Pastor Rodney Howard-Browne (who is originally from South Africa and calls himself a missionary to America) was arrested and booked into a local jail. His crime? Holding Sunday worship services at The River at Tampa Bay Church. He was charged with unlawful assembly and violating the county’s stay-at-home order. continued »

charismatics. She even called us (and others who agreed with us) a “basket of deplorables.” Trump was an unknown in many ways, but 81% of Bible-believing Christians took our chances on him. And he has made it a point to emphasize “promises made, promises kept.” In my books, I’ve documented some of these:

- » Supreme Court justices.
- » Right to life.
- » Support for Israel.
- » Energy independence.
- » Immigration and border security.
- » Deregulation.
- » Religious freedom,

One of the president’s most important promises was his pledge to fight for religious liberty and persecuted Christians around the world. The First Amendment enshrined our religious freedoms before the other freedoms. That’s because God is the giver of our rights, and religious freedom is the foundation for all other rights.

One suspects the real reason the Left hates President Trump is he did what he said he would do.

As the intolerant “cancel culture”



On Oct. 8, 2018, at the White House, retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Anthony M. Kennedy swears in Judge Brett Kavanaugh as a Supreme Court justice while President Trump and Kavanaugh's family celebrate the achievement.

Two Opposing Futures

I believe the moment of truth will soon be upon us, as there are two very different possible scenarios ahead. I am concerned that if Trump loses, our reprieve as a nation and church could be over. God has given us four years of grace so we could be about His business! If that grace period comes to an end, I believe that will be a direct rebuke to the church and the fact that we didn't do enough, despite the tremendous grace He showed us. Instead, if we, in fact, did continue with business as usual and basically lost our blessing period, ushering in a period of great sorrow and woe, it may be even worse than the Great Depression.

Many noncharismatic evangelicals agree with me that there is a segment of liberal evangelicals who tend to vote Democratic every election cycle who now have come out as "Never Trumpers." The media loves to cover what they say against the president.

Also, because the Black community traditionally votes Democratic, many Pentecostal Black preachers and their members may still vote for Biden-Harris this time. But I've noticed they don't tend to speak up because they really don't embrace the anti-church, anti-God stances of many far Left Democrats. And as I document in a chapter in *God, Trump, and the 2020 Election* called "Black Americans, Democrats and Trump," that is beginning to change. It will be interesting to see how many end up voting for Trump for the same reasons I do.

I cannot stress enough the importance of the time period we are in right now! God responds directly to the prayers of the righteous! We have seen this consistently throughout the Bible and history. What we do right now is utterly important! Will we respond in a manner that pleases the Lord?

Many Christians have not even understood the importance and spiritual relevance of this reprieve season of grace. Instead of activating, many have been focused on the wrong things or remained in a spiritual stupor. Others have looked to the president to make

The media loved this story—"crazy Pentecostal pastor" endangers the health of his church members by recklessly disregarding governmental edicts for non-essential gatherings of more than 10 people. But the case brought up some interesting legal issues. Are churches, which have constitutional rights for freedom of worship, "essential" in the midst of this coronavirus crisis?

Mat Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel, came to Howard-Browne's defense. The results were amazing. Staver sued for violation of the church's constitutional rights to freedom of religion and freedom of assembly, and the county dropped the case. On Charisma News, we published an op-ed by Liberty Counsel stating its position in the case, and my *Strang Report* podcast with Pastor Rodney was one of the most-listened-to episodes of the year. What happened to Pastor Rodney should be a wake-up call for us all.

What happened in 2016 was a direct response to the prayers of the righteous here in America and beyond. It was a last-minute reprieve! It was a period where God was willing to show His mercy, His grace and His love and give us just a little more time.

Jeremiah Johnson, a rising prophetic voice from Charlotte, North Carolina, told me in a podcast: "There's a real recipe for awakening, especially in America. Some of the greatest 'gods'—sports, entertainment—are being shut

down. Schools are being closed, which is forcing needed relational proximity for marriages and families. Large churches and conferences are being canceled, which allows for house-to-house gatherings like the book of Acts. So I believe around the time of Passover, we're going to see [the virus] really slow down, but I believe in the midst of this, there's a divine reset. There's a recipe for awakening."

This reprieve was granted not only to the American people, but to the American church. Our mandate was simple: *Do not* act as if it's business as usual. God wanted us to repent as a nation and as a church! To begin to lead the culture again in accordance with the truth of the Word of God. To once again stand for righteousness and push back against the demonic agenda we were under so we could change the trajectory in which this nation was headed.

Now, as we look back at the last four years, has the American church fulfilled its part of the bargain? Have we risen up in prayer, fasting and standing for righteousness? Have we been outspoken from the pulpit and pushed back against the assignment of the enemy to morally bankrupt our culture and attack our children's minds and identities? Have we made progress in taking our country back from falling off the moral abyss? Have we in the Spirit-filled community done enough?

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.

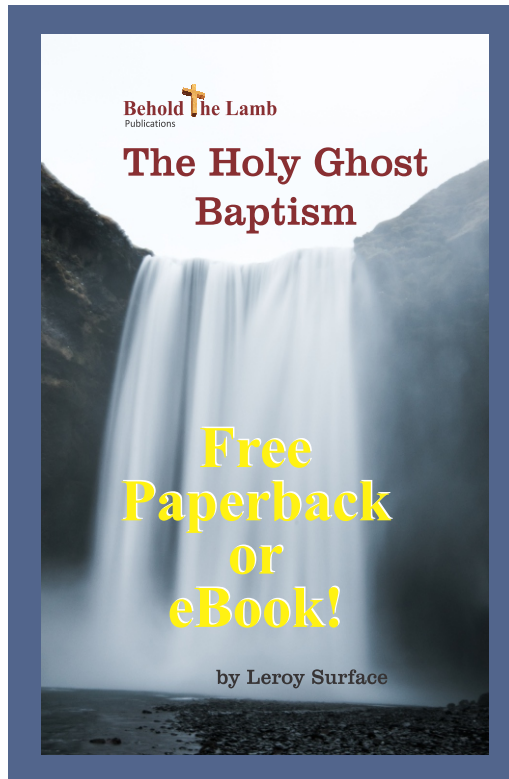
Above fifty years ago, a "new revelation" began to take hold in

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 prophecy at their will, that is, if you are one who would rather have the presence of God.



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the needed changes.

The question is: Have we really done what God has asked of us? Is it too late already? Or can we still step up and make our impact now?

For years, we in the Bible-believing community have talked about our nation's need for revival. The question many believers are asking today is, could the devastation of COVID-19 lead to a new spiritual awakening in America? It's notable that America's first two Great Awakenings, around the time of the American Revolution and later during the Civil War, arrived during periods of struggle and hardship.

It will take a huge spiritual revival for the country to truly change. But the cancel culture is threatening to cancel people one by one. If people are canceled, how can they have a voice and influence others? What if we lost Christian TV? What if churches started to be closed?

God has placed this message heavily on my heart for a reason! His question remains: Will you respond? This is a moment of great decision. What we do and what happens next



will determine a lot.

I do believe spiritual warfare is at work in our world, and God has given us a reprieve for a reason. His desire is that we repent and turn from our wicked ways. He wants the church to wake up and understand the true battle at hand. We are meant to lead the culture, to be the head and not the tail.

I believe if we were to repent, we could see a great revival in this nation. But again, we first need to understand that our problem is not Donald Trump; our problem is us.

We need to see how far this nation,

and the church in this nation, have strayed from our first love, Jesus Christ! God has given us some time. What will we do with it?

That time may be shorter than we think. It is not business as usual. Now is the time for us to rise up and be the church. Our very future depends on it. ◀

STEPHEN STRANG is founder of Charisma. His recent books, *God, Trump, and the 2020 Election* and *Spirit-Led Living in an Upside-Down World* are available on Amazon.com. Listen to his podcast, *The Strang Report*, each Tuesday and Thursday on the Charisma Podcast Network.



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50 STATES
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WILL WE MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION?

Franklin Graham has labored to wake up America and get people to the polls to judge a righteous judgment.
Will America respond?



BY JENNIFER LeCLAIRE

It's hard to imagine Franklin Graham smoking cigarettes, gulping beer and fist fighting. It's difficult to believe this self-described bad boy—who dropped out of one school and was expelled from another—would repent and rise up in the spirit of Elijah to turn the heart of a nation back to the Father.

But this once-prodigious son who, in his early 20s, rebelled against his godly heritage had an encounter with Jesus that left him burning and shining for God. Now, he's laboring with everything in him to see a nation born again.

God has raised up Franklin, the son of the beloved evangelist Billy Graham and his late wife, Ruth, as a bold voice of truth and morality in a world that seems to be growing darker by the day. So bold and uncompromising is Franklin, in fact, that the White House and the National Association of Evangelicals—and even pastors like T.D. Jakes—have rebuked him for telling it like it is.

Franklin refuses to remain silent in the face of rising defiance to God's Word. He is not ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16). He is ready to make a defense to anyone who asks for the reason he hopes in Christ (1 Pet. 2:15-16). He is exposing the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). He is telling the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). He is speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves (Prov. 31:8). Like the prophets of old who saw judgment coming to Israel, Franklin is blowing the trumpet of righteousness and praying people in America will heed the warning.

Franklin has fire in his bones, and he's worked since January to set revival fires in America that awaken the hearts of Christians to make an immovable decision for morality in the 2016 presidential election and beyond. God sent him on a mission to visit every state in America to challenge Christians to live out their faith at home, in public and at the ballot box. His Decision America tour has seen prayer lifted up and the gospel preached at state capitol steps from sea to shining sea.

"Our country has shifted," Franklin told me. "This shift is the moral decline of the nation—and even the moral decline of the church. I felt the only hope for this country was the people of God beginning to pray and maybe He would give us some leaders that would help turn this nation around morally. I feel the only hope for this country is God. Politicians can't save it without God's help. We need to pray."

Franklin's Clarion Call

Franklin is making a clarion call—and people are responding by the tens of thousands. Des Moines, Iowa, was the first stop on Franklin's tour. He admits he was shocked when a couple thousand people showed up to pray in January's bitter cold and snow.

Together, they confessed the sins of our nation, the sins of past generations and the sins of their own lives, then asked God to heal the hearts of people in America, to heal the land and give us leaders who will call upon the Lord for wisdom. This was the model for every stop on the tour.

"People realize God's judgment—His hand of judgment—is coming on this country because of our moral failure as a nation and because we turned our back on God," Franklin says. "I believe God answers prayer. God uses prayer, no question about it. People on the steps of every state capitol called out in the name of Jesus. I believe God hears those prayers."

At the conclusion of each meeting, Franklin gave a three-minute gospel presentation. He says hundreds of people receive Christ at each event.

According to the Billy Graham Evangelical Association, a woman named Brenda who heard Franklin share the gospel at the Arizona Capitol grounds couldn't believe God could love a person like her. "I made some very bad choices in life," Brenda says. "God brought me to my knees to show me where my life was going, and I chose Jesus. I once was lost, but now I'm found—all the glory of God."

BGEA also recounts the testimony of Laura, who joined the prayer rally in Georgia, and was motivated to step up her prayer life. "Hearing his service made me realize I needed to pray for the USA," she says. "Our leaders do not have the U.S. citizens' well-being at heart and have neglected to put God first."

Franklin tells breakthrough story after breakthrough story like these, but the tour that hopes to turn America back to God has not been without opposition. Getting permits in some cities was challenging. The Holy Spirit ultimately used Franklin's father's legacy to open doors no man could shut.

"We've seen God's hand at work," he says. "It's a spiritual war, and we do have an enemy who wants to stop us. But we've seen time and time again God's people in place—sometimes at lower levels—who are able to pull the levers and make things happen."

Beyond cranky city clerks, Franklin has also experienced organized opposition on his 50-state tour. In Sacramento, the LGBTQ+ community organized a demonstration on the north side of the capitol building at 11 a.m. Franklin's event was set for the west side of the building at noon. The opposition's plan was to gather reinforcements and protest the Decision America meeting.

When Franklin heard about the plans, he thought about how God shut the mouths of the lions when Daniel was thrown into the lion's den. He then prayed the Lord would quiet the mouths of the protesters. By 11 a.m., the opposition had gathered 25 people. By 11 a.m., about 10,000 people showed up to pray for America.

"The gays and lesbians with their handful of people gave

up,” Franklin says. “They held up their signs, but they didn’t make any noise. They didn’t do anything to distract us. At the very end, we closed by singing ‘God Bless America,’ and they joined in singing with us.”

Meanwhile, in Madison, Wisconsin, atheists gathered at Franklin’s event with signs proclaiming, “We don’t mind burning in hell.” When thousands of people start interceding, he says, it took the wind out of their sails. The voice of righteousness prevailed.

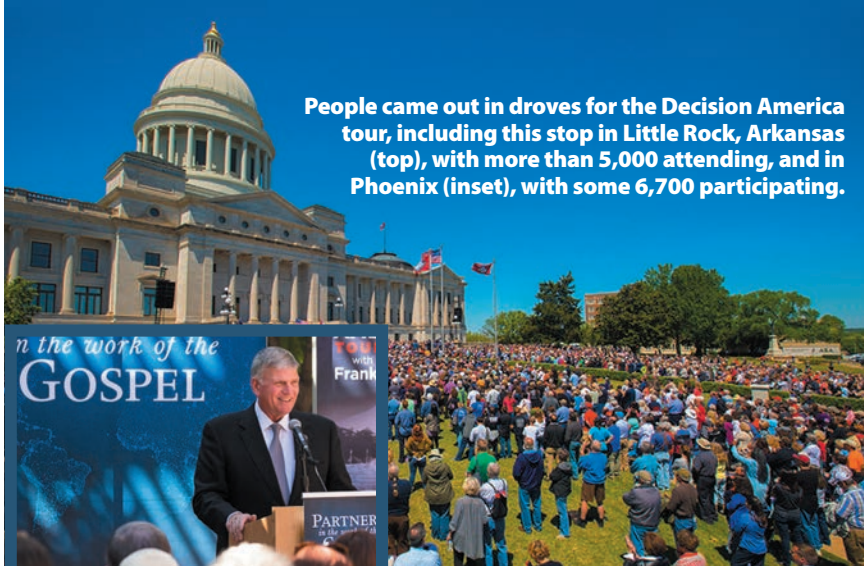
“There is no stronger voice for righteousness in America today than that of Franklin Graham,” says Dr. James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, a global Christian ministry aiming to help families thrive. “He takes every opportunity, whether as a guest on Fox News or in the public square, and takes it straight to the cross. In a world where many pastors and laymen are afraid to speak candidly about their faith and the controversial moral issues of our day, Franklin is a beacon of truth. I admire him greatly.”

Preaching a Black-and-White Gospel

Franklin doesn’t mince words. He told me we have to wake up. He told me too many pastors are sitting on the sidelines with a politically correct spirit. He told me gays and lesbians get behind their candidates, and Christians should too. He told me we’re seeing God’s hand slowly coming off our nation. He told me America is rejecting Jesus the way Israel rejected Jehovah. He told me we need to repent.

“We don’t want to offend anybody. We want to attract people to the church. Well, I tell you what attracts people is truth,” Franklin told me unapologetically. “Jesus Christ, He confronted people. It’s not about political correctness. It’s not about not loving people. We should love them enough to speak the truth. And with the gay and lesbian community, I don’t want to beat up on them. I love them enough to warn them of God’s judgment. I love them enough to warn them that hell awaits all sinners, all sinners. And we should love them enough to tell them the truth.”

Throughout the Decision America



People came out in droves for the Decision America tour, including this stop in Little Rock, Arkansas (top), with more than 5,000 attending, and in Phoenix (inset), with some 6,700 participating.

“Jesus Christ, He confronted people. It’s not about political correctness. It’s not about not loving people. We should love them enough to speak the truth.” —Franklin Graham

tour, Franklin worked to stir Christians to stand for unadulterated truth. He wants to see more people praying, yes, but he also wants to see them stand up and speak out. He wants Christians to be vocal, to become community organizers and political activists who live and labor for God and His standards. He’s asking Christians to run for office, be strong and courageous, and refuse to bow to intimidating godless agendas.

“I pray that our nation will wake up and that as a country, we would repent our sins. The Obama administration legalizing same-sex marriage is incredible. It’s a great sin. With this administration, abortions are made easier and not harder. It’s evil and it’s wicked,” says Franklin.

“Christians are getting complacent, and we’re just beginning to accept this,” Franklin warns. “It’s not OK. It’s wrong. We need to stand up and we need to fight. When I say fight, I’m saying we need to speak God’s truth. People need to know and understand that these are sins and this grieves God. We can fight by going to the ballot box, and we can vote for Christians and let the other candidates know, ‘We’re not going to vote for you.’”

The American Family Association (AFA), which promotes fundamental Christian values, has been promoting Decision America all over the country. Tim Wildmon, president of AFA, is

concerned that America is in open rebellion to God, especially when it comes to human sexuality. Wildmon told me we need more voices like Franklin’s to blow the trumpet.

“Franklin Graham could have avoided the controversial cultural issues and been commended by everyone for his charitable work through Samaritan’s Purse, but chose to be public about God’s moral standards, and I commend him for it,” says Wildmon. “We are promoting what the Bible calls wickedness in so many ways.”

Believing for Revival

Although Graham is not endorsing any political candidates, he does encourage people to vote. As he puts it, we may have to “hold our nose” when we go to the polls because no candidate is perfect. His advice: Vote for the one who will listen to the plight of Christians and appoint judges who could have a positive moral impact on this nation.

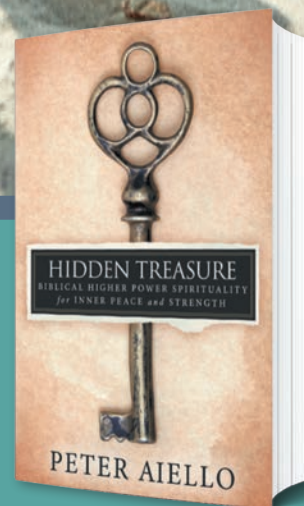
“Only God can do this, only God,” Franklin says. “We have gone too far. We need a revival in this country. And that’s going to start with people praying. Going to these capitol steps, I ask people, ‘What do you do tomorrow?’ I ask them to form prayer groups in their communities and get people of other political persuasions to join them. At the end of this tour, we hope to see hundreds,

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Peter Aiello

possibly thousands, of new prayer groups springing up across the country, people praying for this nation.”

Despite some who have a defeatist mentality, Wildmon warns it absolutely matters who our president is. Our very way of life could be at stake. The Bill of Rights, including freedom of speech and freedom of religion, could be at stake.

“It is silly to underestimate the power of the executive branch of government,” Wildmon says. “Secular progressives are on the warpath against Christianity, and

will participate in this great experiment in liberty. My father once said, ‘Democracy is the worse form of government if the people want evil. In that system, there will be no stopping those who want what is harmful and wicked.’ I think he was right.”

Handwriting Is on the Wall

As Franklin sees it, there is no doubt that the 100,000-plus who have joined forces with the Decision America tour know that America is in deep trouble and on the verge of total moral and spiritual

wonders if the handwriting is now on the wall for America.

“Has God decided that our idolatry, immorality and godlessness have become such a stench in His nostrils that we as a people will experience a harsh form of divine judgment?” he asks. “Have our iniquities grown so foul and vast that we will reap the bitter harvest of our wickedness and rebellion against Almighty God?”

“I don’t know the answer to that, but I do believe that God is able to restore and heal us if we repent of our sins—personal and corporate—and turn to Him in humility and reverence. The Bible tells us that the Lord is patient toward us, ‘not willing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance’” (2 Pet. 3:9).

Franklin offers four truths about prayer and politics as Americans prepare to head to the polls: 1) God can turn the hearts of kings (Prov. 21:1). In America’s case, that translates to political leaders. Our prayers for godly counsel to surround political leaders empower the Holy Spirit to move. 2) Interceding for those in authority is a biblical command (1 Tim. 2:1-2). 3) Pray urgently for all elected leaders (Eph. 6:12). 4) Pray for leaders who don’t know Christ to be born again (1 Tim. 2:3-4).

Dobson agrees and urges Christians to follow 2 Chronicles 7:14 and its four provisions. Paraphrased, it reads, we who are called by God’s name must humble ourselves before Him and pray and seek His face and turn from our wicked ways.

“If we do as instructed, then our gracious Lord will respond with three blessings. He promises to hear from heaven, to forgive our sins and to heal our land,” Dobson says. “That is one of the most precious promises in all of Scripture. It is not too late for America. What we need is a revival that will sweep the nation, as it did in the First and Second Great Awakenings. That is the hope of our nation.” ◀

JENNIFER LECLAIRE is director of the *Awakening House of Prayer*, and author of *The Next Great Move of God: An Appeal to Heaven for Spiritual Awakening*. Her new book, *Vindicated*, releases Nov. 5th, and is available for pre-sale on Amazon now. Visit her online at jenniferleclair.org.



Some 6,300 Minnesotans gathered at the capitol's lower mall in St. Paul on June 16, 2016, during the Decision America Tour.

they will continue to come after us in many ways, should they win the White House. Yes, God cares about these things. America has been a beacon of light for the world in so many ways based on her Christian heritage.”

Historically, wickedness in cultures has been progressive and eventually pandemic. One of the factors that concerns Dobson about a Hillary Clinton presidency is profound: She is not the same person she was when Barack Obama took office. Dobson told me the cultural influences of the past eight years seem to have incited Hillary, and she will pick up where President Obama concluded his second term.

“In this sense, each election is more dangerous than the last, because the people become more accustomed to godless ideology,” Dobson says. “What is at stake in the next election is the loss of America as it has been known. If we don’t vote, we leave all the decisions of consequence to those with no moral convictions. The only hope for America is that voters who are basically ‘good,’ even if they are not perfect,

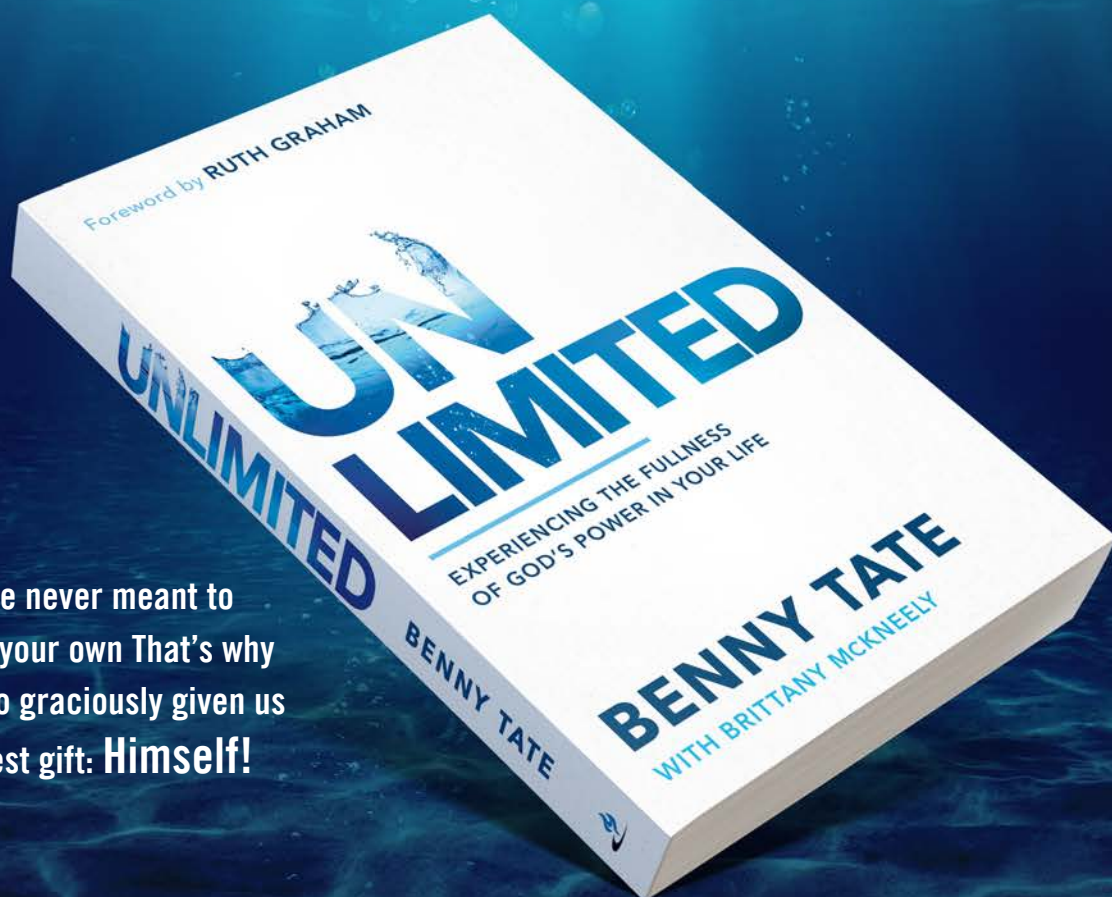
collapse—unless God intervenes. Like him, Franklin says they have no hope in either the Democratic or Republican Party. They know our only hope is in Almighty God.

“Never before have I seen such a sharp rift in the moral and spiritual fabric of our country,” Franklin says. “The cross of Christ has become the deep divide between a growing segment of our population that no longer fears God and those who follow Christ as Lord and Savior.”

“In this secular age, the influence of biblical principles and values has diminishing impact upon education, government and politics. More young people than ever before claim no religious affiliation at all. We Christians are not just simply tolerated—we are under constant, unrelenting assault for our beliefs and practices.”

The cross of Christ is the dividing line between the righteous and the unrighteous, between the deceitfully dark powers of evil and the liberating light of the gospel, between the virtues of godly living and the unfettered lusts of corrupt, debased passions, Franklin says. And he

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Bounce Back From **Election Burnout**



Many Christians felt devastated after the 2020 election. Some don't even want to vote again because they feel betrayed by candidates, misled by the media or abused by voter fraud. Here is a heavenly blueprint on how to move forward.

BY BUNNI POUNDS

After the November 2020 election, disillusionment set in. The quest for the truth about the presidential elections ended—for me and for many of us around the nation—without resolution.

If you are one of those people who has lost hope in our electoral system in America, I pray the words that follow speak life back into you. We have experienced this national trauma together, and God wants to help us recover. So how do people of faith move on from this dramatic election season?

As a political professional, do I believe there was voter fraud in this last presidential election? Yes, I do. I saw it with my own eyes.

Do I believe there was enough to produce a different presidential election outcome? I do not know that definitively. I do know there were provable injustices, and they were all but swept under the rug.

Less than a week after the November election, I found myself on a plane flying to Las Vegas, Nevada. I did not go there to relax and recover from an intense season of running a congressional race and speaking on behalf of our Texas nonprofit, Christians Engaged, *christiansengaged.org*. Instead, the Holy Spirit moved me to head back into battle—to Clark County, the forefront of some of the fiercest allegations of voter fraud in the presidential race.

Exhausted, I could not stop until I discovered the truth in a state where the president was down by only 33,000 votes. Clark County had report after report of voter fraud because of mail-in ballots. Officials had mailed out ballots to every registered voter whether they requested one or not—a clear formula for disaster.

From shady neighborhoods to trailer parks to luxurious homes and empty lots, I drove around with a new friend, investigating over 200 locations and—over the course of three days—filling out over 58 incident reports of voter fraud.

Our team from around the country completed over 2,000 incident reports in under a week as we went door to door asking questions of people who had received a ballot in the mail for someone who no longer lived there. The exercise was maddening, but necessary.

As a Bible teacher, motivational speaker, 15-year political consultant and former congressional candidate, I have devoted my life to seeing good people get elected and helping them serve our nation. It doesn't take discernment to know that the struggle is real. The intensity of the ideological divisions has been widening for decades. Unfortunately, few Christians have paid attention. For years, Christians on the front lines of the political movements have felt alone and often misunderstood.

Most of us based our vote for president and for other leaders on our biblical values. We hold convictions that the unborn are worth protecting; our democratic ally in the Middle East, the nation of Israel, is worth defending; and our religious liberties need to be upheld against a culture that wants to cancel us. We made choices to vote for those we felt would represent God's desires for our country.

Many of our national leaders, including former President Trump, didn't respond to this post-election conflict perfectly. So how do we keep moving forward with motivation to vote and engage again?

Awaken From Sleep

God used Trump, former Vice President Mike Pence—and an army of bold leaders around them—to shake many Christians from their sleep. Though our president was imperfect, misunderstood and sometimes combative, he shook up the norms and the

“Jesus is ultimately our King. We must place our trust in Him regardless of what administration is in the White House or if our candidate won or lost.”



political class system. He tried to focus the American mindset on the issues that mattered most.

Whether you loved him, tolerated him or hated him, Trump demanded a response from everyone. And many of us in the Christian community were thankful he was willing to defend our faith and our family values, standing up for the issues we cared about regardless of the backlash.

As someone who has worked in ministry and politics for almost two decades, I saw a Spirit-fueled awakening in ordinary Christians. The Lord gave me a prophetic word from Romans 13:11 (NKJV) as a mandate to go find the awakening people: “Do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we first believed.”

God called me, along with my army of friends, to plug Christians into a system of praying, voting and engaging regularly for the sake of our nation, asking God to bring discernment as we taught biblical values and our basic civic duties as American citizens.

The Holy Spirit has been breathing on us as the church and awakening us to pray amid a nation that is increasingly more hostile toward biblical values. We have grown in an understanding that our elected officials and government leaders have more power over our lives than we ever understood before. The COVID-19 lockdowns have served as a case in point. How many of us did not know the name

of our county judge or mayor before early last year?

Through this season, the Spirit has awakened many of us to the fact that our republic is in trouble and demands our participation. So what do we do now that the courts have said there wasn’t “significant evidence of voter fraud”—at least not enough for a do-over? What do we do after the Supreme Court’s refusal to take a case, responding with “no standing”?

We cannot go back to sleep. America needs me, and America needs you.

Trust in God

The night before the election, our ministry held a prayer call with faith and political leaders across the state of Texas. One of the members of Congress on that call made a statement that, a week later, hit me as profound. He said, “One of the worst things that could happen is that the election goes exactly like you want it to go, and then you put your trust in elections rather than God.” This came from someone who had a lot to lose if his candidate did not win.

His point, a good reminder to all of us, is that Jesus is ultimately our King. We must place our trust in Him regardless of what administration is in the White House or if our candidate won or lost.

God did not wake up in shock on the day after the election. He was not taken aback by a lack of voter turnout in some places, voter fraud in others and a system that did not answer the questions we asked.

“I will lift up my eyes to the hill, from where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, maker of heaven and earth” (Ps. 121:1-2, MEV).

We do not find our hope and peace in human institutions or governments, but in our walk with Jesus, which holds us together day by day.

Scripture admonishes us to pray for our government leaders—“for all who are in authority” (1 Tim. 2:b) regardless of whether we agree with them. This takes faith and obedience on our part with great trust in the King of kings and the Lord of lords. We turn our eyes back to Jesus.

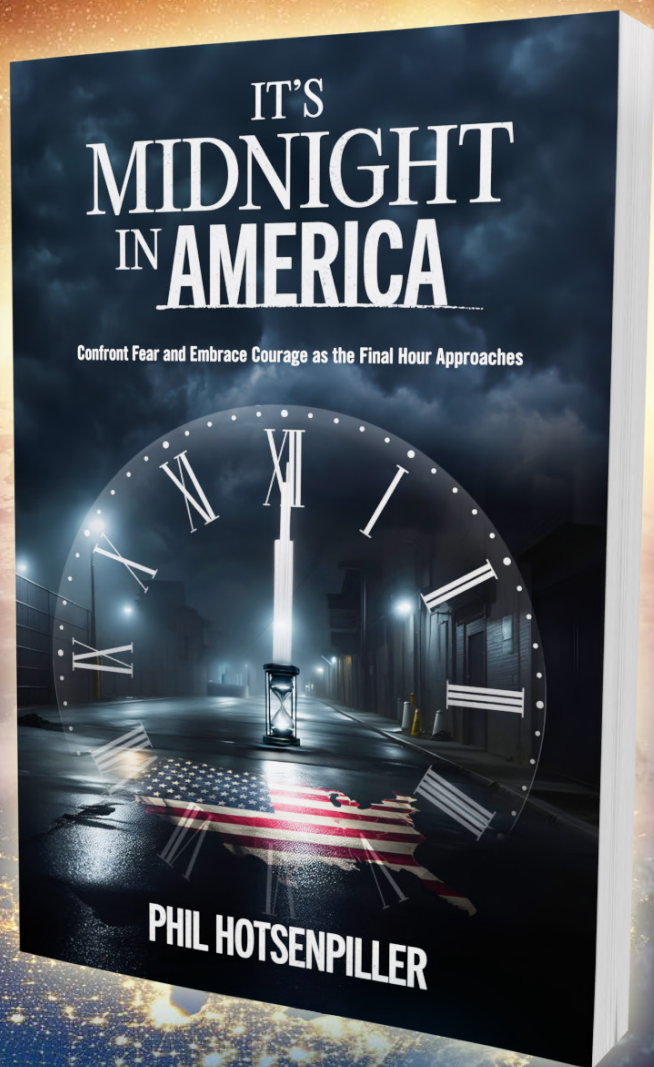
For too long, we, as the American church, have had our heads in the sand, waiting for Jesus to come back yet letting our cities, states and nation be corrupted by unbelieving and damaging forces. Our own prosperity, entertainment, academia and the media have lulled us to sleep. Opposing worldviews tell us that everything is wonderful in this “enlightened” new America and that we should just stay focused on taking our children to soccer, dance recitals and church activities. Socialism creeps in—now in broad daylight—as elites tell us how to live and what not to say, and Big Tech threatens to shut down any opposing viewpoint. Since many pastors sit on the sidelines, sharing positive feel-good messages from their pulpits every Sunday, the church receives no marching orders to change anything.

Over this last season, truth has been

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spoken in many places, and many in the church have awakened to the fact that they must be a voice for change. God has given us His Word, not just to meditate on in our homes but to disciple the nations (see Matt. 28:19). Through a national election process and its aftermath, prayers were lifted up worldwide for our beautiful nation, and many people for the first time joined national intercessory efforts to see God's kingdom impact earth. He heard those prayers.

Regardless of our personal disappointments over this last election and its effects playing out on our television screens every day since, we cannot give up. As we agonize over the trajectory of our culture and the laws that further ungodliness, God knows our turmoil. He has not forgotten us, and we must trust in Him to accomplish His work.

Press for Election Integrity

Voter fraud has occurred throughout America's history. Robert A. Caro's award-winning book, *Means of Ascent*, documents the fact that Lyndon Johnson's U.S. Senate race in 1948 was rigged—the one in which he overcame a 20,000-vote deficit to achieve his famous 87-vote victory in a Democratic runoff primary against a former Texas governor.

Four other presidential elections in our history were disputed with furious allegations of fraud, including John Quincy Adams' win in 1824 and John F. Kennedy's victory in 1960.

In Texas, where we have some of the toughest voter ID laws in the nation, Attorney General Ken Paxton announced in 2019 that the state had 95,000 non-citizens on its state voter rolls since 1996, 58,000 of whom had voted in at least one Texas election.

In Dallas County, where I live, we have been dealing with a corrupt elections department and ballot integrity issues for over a decade.

We have problems everywhere. No county or state is exempt. So what do we do to change it?

We can't throw up our hands and shout, "My vote doesn't matter!" Every citizen in America can do something to protect our democratic system as it relates to voter fraud.

» Because elections are held by the states, make sure your state legislature passes strong election integrity bills.

We cannot just blanket mailboxes with mail-in ballots again because of a pandemic or any national crisis. We need paper ballots that are numbered, and we need National Technical Information Services standards put in place on all voting machines to minimize fraud and hacking. Election integrity should be the No. 1 priority of every elected official. If it is not the top priority for your leaders, communicate the importance to them. Follow bills on the state level and testify in front of the committees for their passage. Recruit others who are frustrated to do more than sit on the sidelines and complain.

» Get involved in putting pressure on your county and state to clean up the voter rolls. Check with your elected officials and political party leadership (this should be a bipartisan issue) to make sure the election administrator in your area and your secretary of state are doing their jobs and removing voters who are deceased, non-citizens or who have moved out of state from voter files. It could take some concentrated work: making phone calls as a concerned citizen, raising money for a national organization or even supporting a lawsuit, but it will protect the integrity of our elections. We owe our children and grandchildren the benefit of thoroughly investigating and rooting out fraud.

» Make sure trusted eyes are on every election by getting trained as an election judge, election worker or poll watcher. Election departments, political parties and candidates are always looking for volunteers to help run elections and to be eyes and ears on the ground. We need trusted American Christians, full of integrity, to be the ones who step up and lead. It doesn't take much time—but it can make a lasting impact to protect the integrity of our elections.

Move Into Recovery

It is time for believers to dig deep in the Word of God and get politically educated. We must use discernment and critical thinking skills to examine the people we are listening to, including ministry leaders. The U.S. as a whole lacks civic

understanding, but the body of Christ cannot settle for ignorance.

Believers have a greater responsibility than other Americans to understand the systems we are trying to influence. God calls us to be salt and light in our culture and represent Jesus in the public arena. We need basic political education and a constitutional understanding as intercessors, voters and concerned citizens of this great land, and we need to demand it of our faith leaders as well. Almost anyone can learn about political parties, take classes on the Constitution, follow trusted ministries that get Christians involved with politics and self-educate for the next battle. Do research, becoming a trusted source who encourages others with good, solid information.

As believers, we must be careful not to compound the real, verifiable issues facing our nation by elevating and sharing dubious information that undermines our arguments and convictions. Social media networks—where anger, outrage and fear are driving forces—amplify misinformation. We must verify our sources.

"He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; He who keeps understanding will find good" (Prov. 19:8).

As we take the time to process this last election season and recover from it, we cannot lose heart. We must put our faith firmly back on God and see voter fraud and the injustices of the last season for what they are—yet in the context of history. We can't go back to sleep; we must allow the Holy Spirit to turn what has been a disappointing season for many of us into fuel to learn and do more. Change for our nation lies in our capable hands, so we must educate ourselves and prepare for future battles.

God is not done with our beautiful America. He is also not done using His glorious bride in this nation we call home. Recover, church, and let's get back to prayer, voting and engagement. ♦

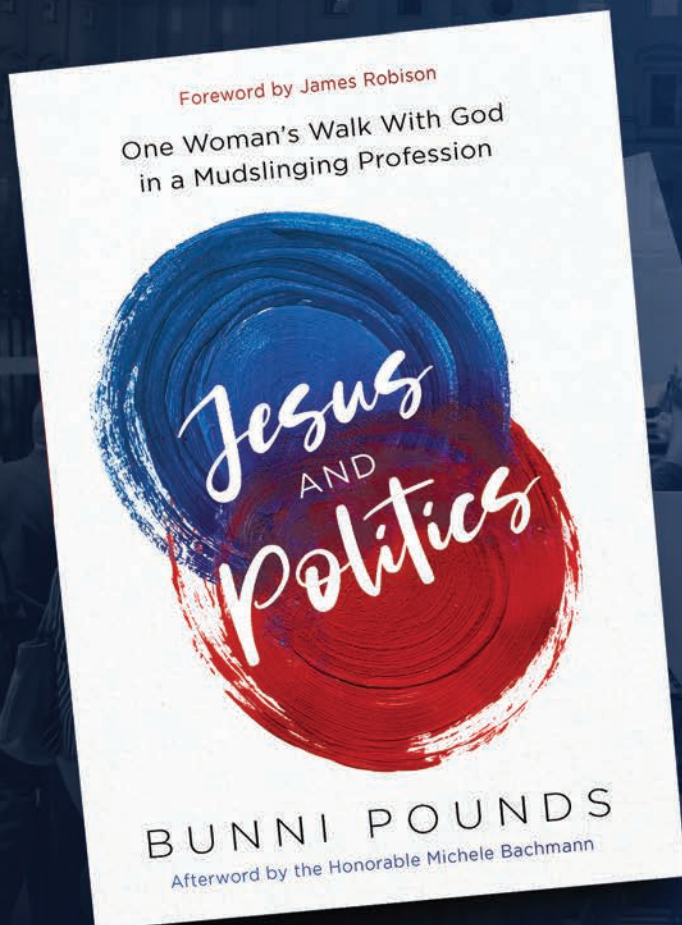
BUNNI POUNDS is the president of *Christians Engaged*—a Texas-based nonpartisan nonprofit connecting believers to habits of prayer, voting and political engagement. She is a former congressional candidate, 15-year political consultant, author and motivational speaker. Her recent new book, *Jesus and Politics*, is available to buy on Amazon now.

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.**



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A PURPOSE for RESTORATION

Taking hold of new rules for Spirit-filled believers,
to land a peaceful CounterPunch

BY FLOYD G. BROWN

As a child, I received one of the greatest gifts parents can ever give: I was raised in a home with parents who took their Christian faith seriously. This has had a lasting impact on my life and played a great part in my role for the past several years as founder of *WesternJournal.com*, helping renew the blessings of liberty for the current generation.

My grandfather was a man of great faith. In May of 1936, he set sail for Indonesia as a missionary and spent four years on the mission field. My father, the oldest of his five children, was raised in church.

He met my mom at Sunday school, they were married in 1959, and I was born in 1961. I accepted Christ as my Savior in 1968 at the age of 7 in my grandfather's dining room. On my knees, I prayed the sinner's prayer.

It is a blessing to come from a family that serves Christ over generations. My parents serve Jesus, I serve Jesus, my three children serve Jesus, and now my grandchildren are being blessed by growing up in a Christian home.

As I look back, I'm grateful that for the first 18 years of my life, whenever the church doors opened, my entire family was there. This has accumulated and accrued in me as a tremendous blessing.

But life isn't a fairytale; life is a journey. It is only when I look back that I see with clarity that God has directed my paths and given me unbelievable opportunities to fulfill His purpose for me.

In an amazing act of providence, I was able to meet Gov. Ronald Reagan in 1976, when I was 15 years old.

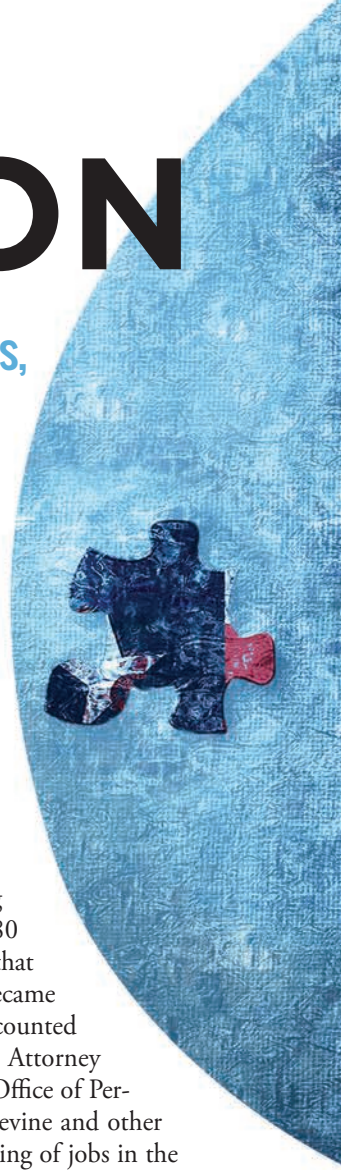
As a result, I became intensely involved in conservative politics.

Politics Without Fulfillment

Throughout high school, I volunteered on many campaigns. During college, I was able to secure my first paid job in politics, becoming the youth coordinator for the 1980 Reagan campaign in Oregon. During that campaign, I met many people who became lifelong friends and mentors. I have counted among them such amazing people as Attorney General Ed Meese, Judge Bill Clark, Office of Personnel Management Director Don Devine and other key Reaganites. As a result, I had a string of jobs in the '80s and '90s that anyone in politics would envy.

In 1983, I moved to Washington, D.C., and was appointed executive director of the United States International Youth Year Commission. I traveled the globe representing the youth of America for the Reagan administration. In 1987, I was made Midwest political director of the Bob Dole for President campaign. The next year, I was appointed political director of Americans for Bush, a major independent expenditure campaign. I served as leader of the team that created what is called the "Willie Horton ad," which *Time* magazine called one of the top 10 political ads of all time.

continued »





Immediately after Bush was elected, I founded a political organization that is today a household name and, to the far Left, a curse word: Citizens United. In 1992, I wrote the bestselling book, *Slick Willie: Why America Cannot Trust Bill Clinton*. My work investigating the Clintons earned me their eternal enmity. They ordered the wiretapping of my phone, and the tapes were played during the *CBS Evening News*.

By 1996, I was back with Bob Dole and ended up helping write the 1996 Republican platform. That same year, I accepted a job back in the Pacific Northwest with Hot Talk 570 KVI, the No. 1-rated radio station in Seattle, and I worked as a talk show host for five years. In 2001, I moved to Santa Barbara, California, and took over the historic preservation of the Reagan Ranch.

During this 20-year period, I had some amazing jobs, but spiritually, I was in a desert. Great and exciting jobs didn't satisfy my heart. I was always planning and striving for my next big position. The fulfillment that can only come with an on-fire, sold-out relationship with Jesus Christ was, to say it nicely, put on hold.

I attended church, I was a Christian, but I was living for myself. I was selfish, I was self-centered, and God was going to give me some real hardships so I could learn to depend on Him—hardships I now see I needed.

Through adversity, I learned that if I slow down and listen, God speaks today, just as He has always spoken to His followers. He is the same today as He was yesterday. He never changes.

Trials With a Purpose

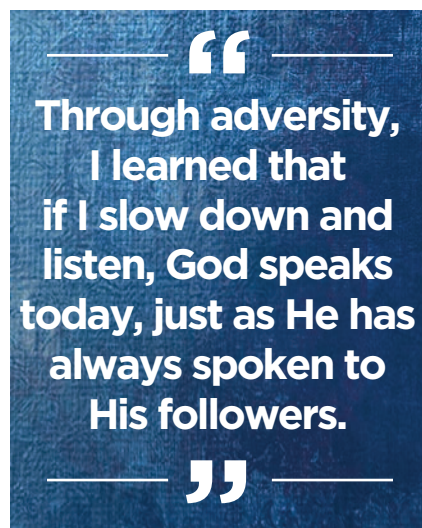
My wife, Mary Beth, and I will have been married 40 years this year. But several years ago, within a span of two years, trials and tribulations dramatically changed our lives. In January 2005, she was rear-ended in what at the time seemed to be a simple fender bender but caused her to have a nerve transplant surgery and unresolved pain to this day.

In April 2005, our son Patrick also experienced an auto accident. His was more serious, forcing him to homeschool for his last two years of high school and delay going to college for a year. He became addicted to the opioids prescribed to help

with the tremendous pain.

These family issues pushed me to make a career change, and I took a new job consulting with several clients. This allowed me to work remotely, and in early 2007, we left Santa Barbara to move closer to family in the Pacific Northwest.

As I watched my child debilitated by pain, I cried out to God for Patrick's healing. Jesus answered, and this is when



our miracles began. The trials didn't stop, but the miracles started.

Patrick was able to secure a surgery and a spinal fusion at cervical 2/3. This stopped spinal fluid from leaking on his brainstem. As his doctors predicted, he saw his pain resolve six months later. We were able to get him off the pain meds that were stealing his life, and he headed to college in fall 2007.

Also, about this time, the 2008 financial crisis hit. I lost a large consulting contract, and I was forced to restructure my business. Money became an issue. Again, I cried out to God and in my crisis, He provided a miracle.

I had graduated from college in 1983 with a degree in economics and been an investor most of my adult life. Providentially, I was asked to write a newsletter to help investors deal with the pain of the 2008 crisis. I then toured the country speaking at investment seminars and helping people rebuild their portfolios.

During this time, I also began doing what was at that time an innovation: I started my own blog. Obama had been recently elected, and I had plenty to write about during his term in office.

Every summer during his break from school, Patrick would rework my website, *WesternJournal.com*. He also suggested that I post my thoughts on a new platform called Facebook. Its traffic grew rapidly from 2009-2014, and my blog grew with it, transforming from a hobby to a business.

Then came 2012. I had been prone to back issues ever since I played high school basketball in the 1970s. In September 2012, I went with my wife to Costco and mishandled a heavy box. Almost immediately, in great pain, I became confined to bed, unable to walk. I visited my orthopedic doctor, and he recommended surgery, gave me pain medication and sent me home until I could get on the surgery schedule.

Two mornings later, I started coughing up blood and ended up in the ICU with a pulmonary embolism, caused by lying still in bed, waiting for surgery. I learned that two out of three PE cases end in death. But this was my next miracle: I lived, praise God. He spared me for a reason. Treatment for the PE meant I couldn't have surgery. Instead, I spent the next year in intensive physical therapy.

With each trial, my relationship with God was changing, growing, deepening. God was preparing me. He was walking with me. He was remaking me. Each time I cried out to God, He was answering and providing. My dependence on Him was growing. He was building my faith with every answer.

Movement With a Message

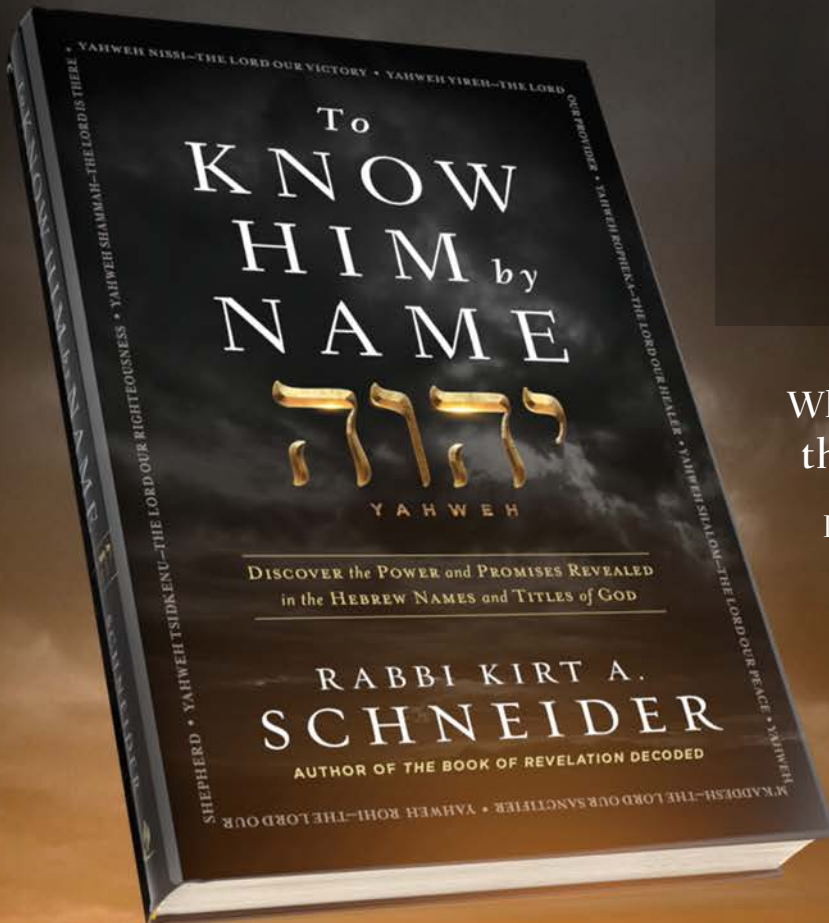
By 2016, Western Journalism had 40 million followers on Facebook. This led to content from our company appearing 11 billion times in the Facebook news feed that year. Our website had more than 1 billion views in 2016. That year, we became the fourth largest publisher on the Facebook platform.

Then Donald Trump was elected. Silicon Valley reacted with tech suppression of conservatives. New problems like shadow banning and social media censorship appeared. Despite our being at the point of the spear under tech suppression, God was faithful. With each Big Tech attack, Western Journalism built workarounds and found alternate news distribution outlets.

In 2017, we renamed the blog

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Floyd Brown with wife, Mary Beth

“With each trial, my relationship with God was changing, growing, deepening.”

WesternJournal.com to recognize its growth from a blog to a full-blown news organization. By this time, we had opened a new headquarters outside Phoenix and employed 100 staff. Because of our success in fighting against tech suppression, we began helping others overcome the same problem.

But the miracles were not over. Two of our greatest challenges lay straight ahead.

In the spring of 2019, I took Mary Beth into the Mayo Clinic for a routine ultrasound, a procedure that was supposed to last half an hour. Three hours later, I was still waiting for her in the lobby. Doctors had found a tumor on her adrenal gland. A series of tests and surgery to remove the tumor soon followed. We held our breath. Would it be cancer?

Then we received the devastating news: Mary Beth had a rare cancer, difficult to treat, called adrenocortical cancer. The typical prognosis is five years until death, and the treatments are almost as horrible as the cancer. We traveled to Texas and MD Anderson Cancer Center for a second opinion on treatment options.

Instead, God had another miracle in mind. Soon after surgery, our pastor, Randy Vanesian, who didn't know about her illness, stopped in the middle of the Sunday service and came and sat next to

Mary Beth. He had the entire church pray for her in a giant intercessory prayer. God had told him to pray for her, and as he prayed, Mary Beth says she felt an electrical charge through her body. Against all odds, to this day, she is cancer-free.

I wish the story had stopped with cancer, but during the height of COVID, Mary Beth and I were on a walk near our home, and she collapsed unexpectedly. Her heart had gone into an abnormal rhythm. I took her to the emergency room; I was not allowed in because of all the COVID rules. The medical team shocked her heart back into rhythm; it had a problem at the aorta that required another surgery to repair. Fortunately, the Mayo Clinic brought a specialist from Rochester, Minnesota, down to Phoenix to operate. And praise God, once again, my wife was healed.

Joy in the Deep End

All these trials have changed me. Today, I have peace. I don't know what the future holds, but I know my loving Savior, Jesus, will be with me through it all.

Today, I hear His voice more than ever when I read His Word and when I pray. When He gives me an assignment, I try to act on it immediately. I have learned that the more I say yes to Him, the more peace and contentment I have. I live every day

for Him, and my prayer for you is to hear Him too. Just listen. He still speaks today through His Holy Spirit, just as He has throughout history.

He fills me up. He makes me happy. He is always there. My only regret is not releasing my life completely to Him earlier. If you haven't released to Him unconditionally, let me say this: The deep end of the pool is awesome.

I close with a verse from the first chapter of James: “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience” (James 1:2-3, NKJV). I can testify that this verse is true.

My latest assignment from God is to write a unique book that pulls together all I have learned in over 40 years of working around media and politics full time. Its title is *Counterpunch: An Unlikely Alliance of Americans Fighting Back for Faith and Freedom*.

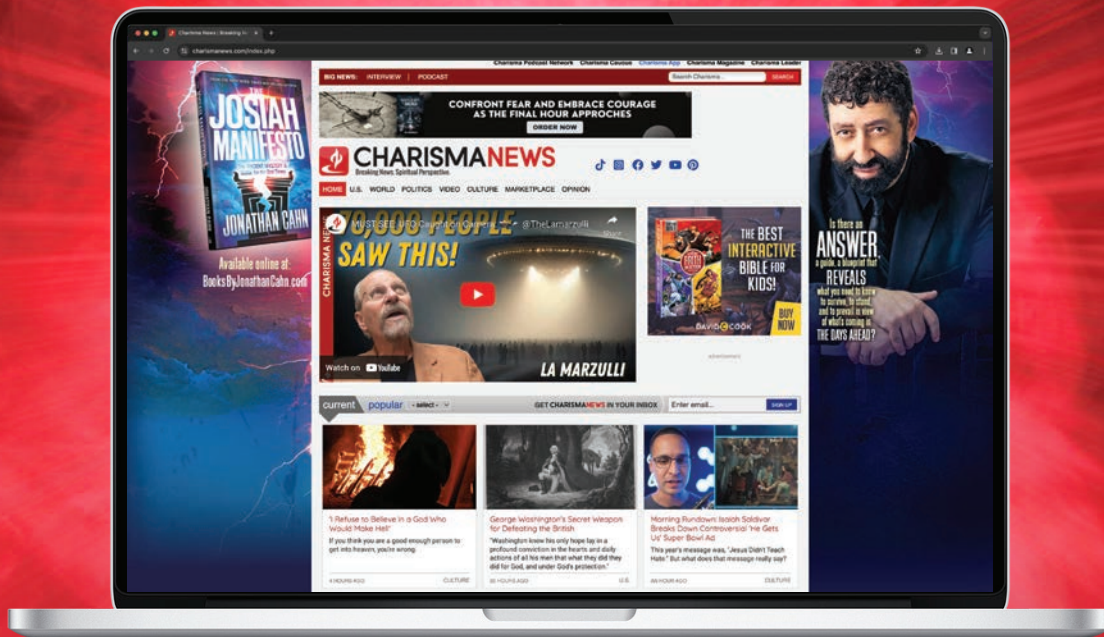
Issue by issue, with the complicity of both parties, the fundamental ideas of our nation, including our faith and freedom, are being crushed for the benefit of powerful elites. Using everything from Big Tech to Big Government, these power brokers are silencing the voices of dissent, canceling those who refuse to fall in line.

Sadly, they are targeting the gospel of Jesus Christ, the message that, through the power of Jesus' blood, has transformed and renewed my own life. I have been called to fight back, and I want you to lock arms with me and fight back too as you discover how an unlikely group of Americans are doing just that in Jesus' name. I pray that you will join our movement to renew the blessings of liberty for the current generation. We purpose to extend America's golden years so we can reach more people than ever with the saving knowledge that only comes from following Jesus Christ.

We are binding together to seek renewal through peaceful pushback against the powerful forces seeking to undermine America. Will you join us? ◀

FLOYD BROWN is an American author, speaker and media commentator. Brown founded the conservative website *The Western Journal* in 2008, and was a political consultant conducting opposition research for political campaigns. His recent book, *Counterpunch*, is available now on Amazon.

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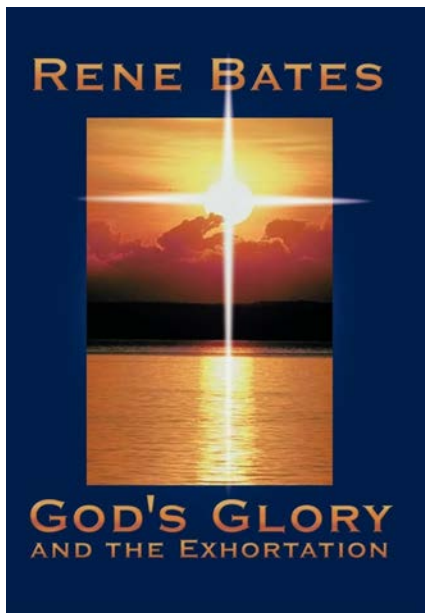
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Refresh Your Spirit

Summer Reading Guide



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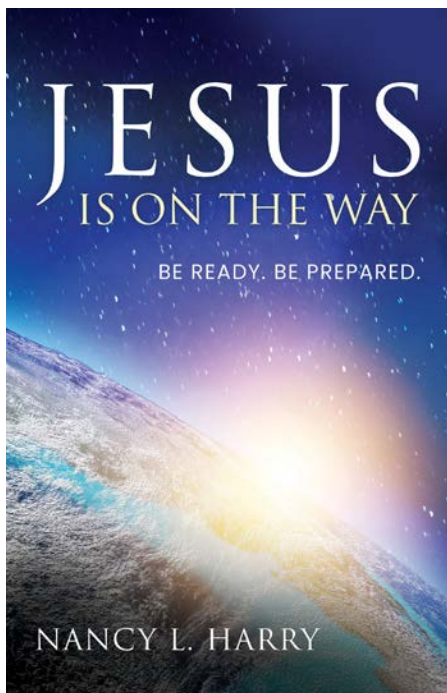
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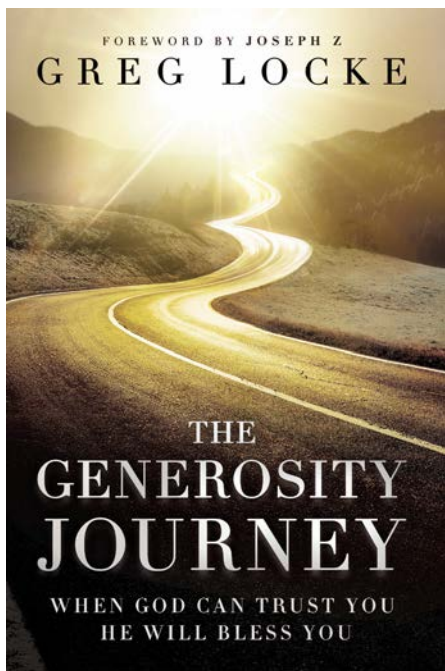
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We are in a day of change. Is the end of our world as we know it around the corner or is a new one on the way? Can we be prepared for what the future holds? This book says we can. Find out how now. There is no time to spare.

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Luke 21:31 says "when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near."

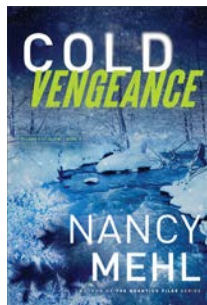
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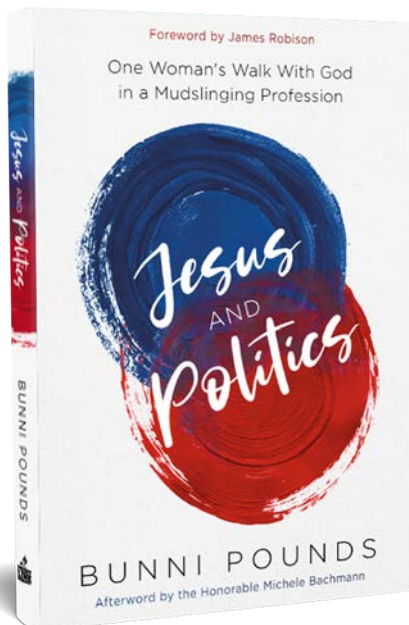
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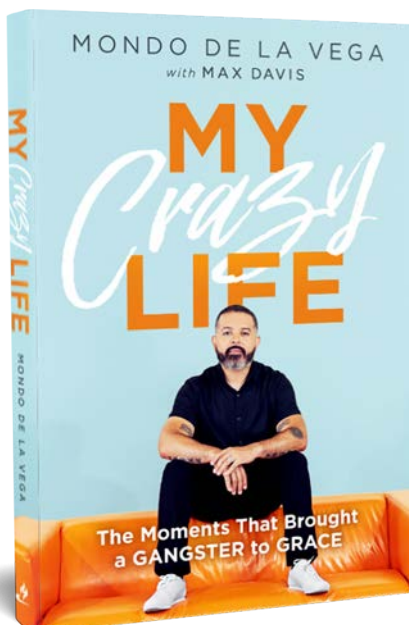
Summer Reading Guide



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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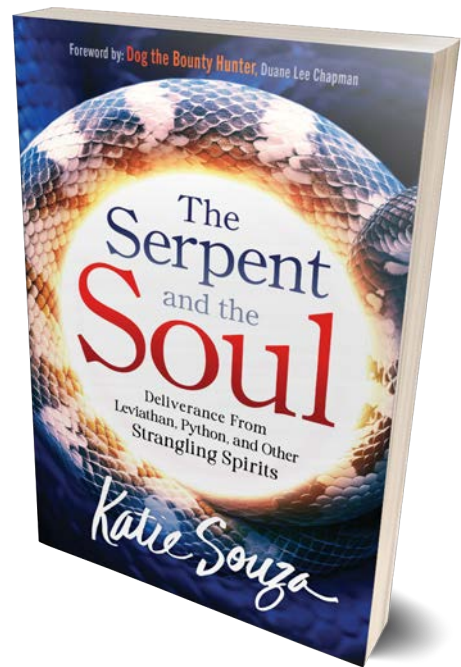
My Crazy Life **by Mondo De La Vega**

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.

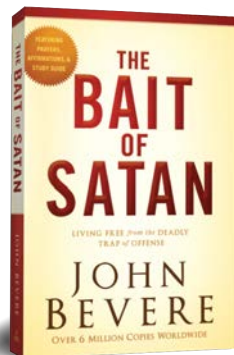
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The Serpent and the Soul by Katie Souza

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*.



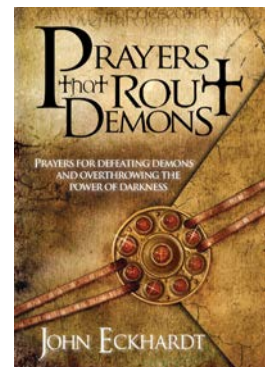
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The Bait of Satan by John Bevere

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!

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