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american family association

May 2022



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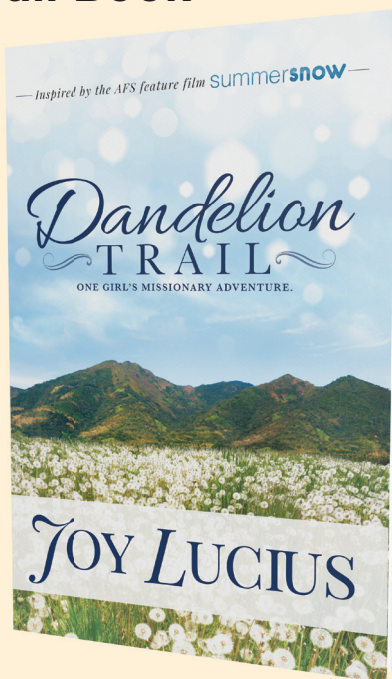
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THE STAND

VOLUME 46, NO. 4

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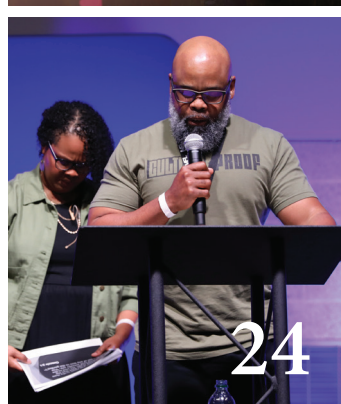
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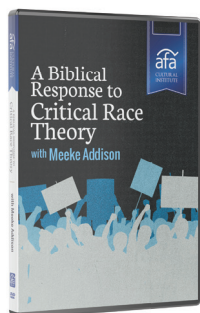


BY TIM WILDMON
AFA PRESIDENT

If it can happen in Virginia ...

More on CRT

► View **A Biblical Response to Critical Race Theory** with Meeke Addison free at streaming.afa.net or order a DVD at resources.afa.net (877.927.4917).



► Read Matthew White's article on CRT at afajournal.org (6/21).

Many Americans are catching on to what the progressive politicians/groups and their supporters in the left-wing media are up to. These people are wicked and are pushing in many different areas to radically move our country away from the Constitution and away from our Judeo-Christian heritage, both of which America was founded on.

Two big ways they are doing this is through what is called Critical Race Theory (CRT) and sex education. CRT teaches that the country is divided into two groups of people – the oppressed (people of color) and the oppressor (white people). One of the talking points of CRT is that white Europeans stole the land we live on from Native Americans, and therefore we are an illegitimate country.

Another talking point is that America was built on the institution of slavery, and therefore our government and society are fundamentally corrupted by whiteness. Thus the expression “systemically racist.” I don’t have time or space here to go into detail, but I urge you to watch AFA’s Meeke Addison on this topic. (*See sidebar.*)

This teaching is being discovered by parents all over the country, and this is one of the main reasons school board meetings are erupting with parents in protest. Even parents who are not necessarily conservative are objecting to their children being subjected to this guilt-by-skin-color teaching.

I will write more on this specifically in future columns. In short, this Marxist plot is being exposed. And when people, even some moderates and liberals, understand what is being taught here, they are rejecting this poison.

As far as sex education goes, those pushing the LGBTQ agenda are trying to push their propaganda down to even kindergartners. This is another reason why parents are reacting all over the country at school board meetings.

Red states in particular are reacting to protect their children from those who want to promote the LGBTQ agenda. In March, the Florida state

legislature passed a bill called the Parental Rights in Education Act. The bill imposes restrictions on school discussions about “sexual orientation and gender identity” from kindergarten through third grade. The bill also gives parents the right to sue school districts that violate provisions in the bill. Governor Ron DeSantis (R) signed the bill into law.


The liberal media dubbed the bill the “Don’t say gay” bill. As they typically do, they misrepresent the true wording and purpose of the law so as to make it appear as mean-spirited bigotry against homosexuals. In actuality, the law basically says kids K-3 in the Sunshine State cannot be subjected to discussions about sexuality because they are too young.

On a side note – as I have stated here before – I think DeSantis is a rock star, and I firmly believe he will one day be president of the United States. He fully understands the clash of worldviews crippling our country, and he has a gift for taking the fight to the secular Left, not unlike former President Donald Trump. However, DeSantis is more disciplined and strategic in his approach and style of governing.

We now know we can win in a lot of places we didn’t think possible just two years ago!

Look at what happened in Virginia, a blue state that now has turned red: Three strong Christians – Governor Glenn Youngkin (white), Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle-Sears (black female), and Attorney General Jason Miyares (Latino) – were elected to the state’s three highest offices.

Yes, these scenarios all sound like what my dad, AFA founder Don Wildmon, dreamed of 45 years ago – citizens actively engaging in the culture. Local school boards. Society’s moral issues. Politics.

The fight for who will control where America is going rages on. It’s not going away, and we conservative Christians must not quit. 

Issues@Hand

AFA initiatives • Christian activism • News briefs

Phase 1 of Don Wildmon Center now complete

After 15 months of construction, Phase 1 of the Don Wildmon Center for Cultural Transformation is complete, and employees are settling into the new facility.

Phase 2, which will include remodeling existing space to accommodate American Family Radio, is now underway. This phase will also include new studios to broadcast AFR's signal across the country.

"We continue to operate under a no-debt policy which means the Don Wildmon Center for Cultural Transformation is paid for with cash," said Walker Wildmon, AFA



vice president of operations. "This undertaking wouldn't be possible without the Lord's direction and the generosity of our faithful supporters."

Look for more details in upcoming issues of *The Stand*.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Marriage, Family, Life Conference

July 7-9 | Tupelo, Mississippi
More details on p. 24.

AFA Foundation Town Hall

October 13, 6-8 p.m.
Rogers, Arkansas

Learn more and register for both events at afa.net/events.

Honor the fallen this Memorial Day

This Memorial Day, May 30, AFA encourages all Americans to take time to honor those who surrendered their lives in all wars.

"We believe the holiday should be used to reflect on our nation's service members who paid the ultimate price for our freedom," said Matthew White, staff writer for *The Stand* and veteran of the Iraq War.

"One of my family's favorite things to do is go together to our local cemetery and spend time in prayer thanking God for the sacrifices of the brave men and women who secured our freedom. Then we place small flags by the headstones of all who have served."

For more ways to honor veterans this Memorial Day, see p. 28.

AFA urges participation in National Day of Prayer

This year's National Day of Prayer will be observed May 5. It exists to initiate and inspire unified public prayer for America.

"We have seen God save our country in the past, and on May 5, we Christians should be on our knees asking Him to do it again," said AFA vice president Buddy Smith. "God is moved by a request for something only He can do."

The National Day of Prayer Task Force encourages communities, churches, and youth groups to hold local events on this day. A wealth of information, resources, and ideas can be found at nationaldayofprayer.org.

See p. 18 for an interview with Kathy Branzell, president of National Day of Prayer.



Contact elected officials

► The President

The White House
Washington, DC 20500
Salutation: Dear Mr. President
Comment line: 202.456.1111
whitehouse.gov/contact

► The Vice President - same as above

► U. S. House of Representatives

The Honorable _____
Washington, DC 20515
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Washington, DC 20510
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► Washington switchboard: 877.762.8762

► afaaction.net/contact-officials

Links to contact information for federal and state officials

Stay involved, informed

► afa.net - Sign up to join AFA Alert email list and stay informed on issues that affect the family.

► afn.net - Find up-to-the-minute news at AFA's online news service.

► afr.net - American Family Radio broadcasts on about 180 stations in three formats - AFR talk, AFR inspiration (music), and AFR Hybrid.

► afa.net/thestand - AFA's official blog addressing culture, faith, and family.

► onemillionmoms.com - Take action to protect children from objectionable elements in entertainment outlets.

► afajournal.org - An archive of past issues of *AFA Journal* (1994-2021).

► engagemagazine.net - A theology and worldview resource for young adult Christians.

► americanfamilystudios.net - Videos feature insight and information on cultural and family issues.

► afa.net/bydesign - An initiative to restore biblical marriage in the culture.

► streaming.afa.net - An online platform that hosts all AFA-produced video content.

Medical group fights physician-assisted suicide

The Christian Medical and Dental Associations (CMDA), represented by Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) attorneys, recently filed suit to protect the rights of its members and stand against a new California law that went into effect January 1.

SB 380, signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) on October 5, further weakens the state's prior rules regulating physician-assisted suicide. The former law required a 15-day waiting period between a patient's request for assisted suicide and the actual granting of end-of-life drugs. Instead, the new law reduces the waiting period to only 48 hours.

According to ADF, medical professionals who object to being involved in such a process "could be subject to civil or criminal penalties and could even lose their license."

Though the text of the new law claims physicians in opposition "shall not be required to participate," the law is misleading, as the doctors are required to transfer the patient to a physician who will, essentially, start the process.

ADF senior counsel Denise Harle said, "No health care professional should be forced to act against their religious beliefs and medical ethics, and the state of California is wrong to enforce such coercion."

christianheadlines.com, 2/23/22; adflegal.org, 2/24/22

Chinese government rewrites Scripture

In an interview with Faithwire, Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) spokesperson Todd Nettleton warned that the Chinese government is attempting to rewrite Scripture to reflect and support the Communist Party. Nettleton added that the "reimagined" Scripture would be comprised of a variety of philosophical perspectives such as Confucianism and Buddhism.

"The issue for the Chinese Communist Party is control," Nettleton explained. "It is always about control. And they see the ... Christian message as something that would take control away from the Communist Party. That's one of the reasons why VOM and other groups are so committed to delivering Bibles into China."

faithwire.com, 2/17/22;

christianheadlines.com, 2/18/22



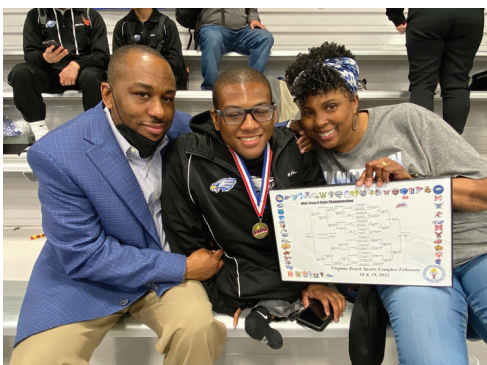
High school champion wrestles without legs

On February 19, Adonis Lattimore, a senior at Landstown High School in Virginia Beach, took first place in Virginia's Class 6 wrestling competition. Being a state champion is quite a feat for any athlete, but 17-year-old Adonis was born with a partial left leg, no right leg, and only one finger on his right hand.

"It's amazing to see how [Adonis] has adapted his abilities," said Tracy Branch, assistant coach at Landstown, "...and how he's been able to use what God gave him to be able to compete at this level."

From the moment of Adonis' birth, Jerrold and Demetria Lattimore knew there was a great calling on their son's life beyond anything they could imagine. Wrestling has been a part of that calling since elementary school, and Adonis now hopes to wrestle at the college level.

"When you say you can't," Jerrold said of his son's accomplishments, "He's the reason you can."



pilotonline.com, 2/11/22; espn.com, 2/20/22

Christian universities welcome Planned Parenthood

Earlier this year, Students for Life of America (SFLA) released a document revealing that many Christian universities have connections to Planned Parenthood (PP). These schools include but are not limited to: Texas Christian University, Virginia Wesleyan University, Southern Methodist University, Rhodes College, and Ohio Wesleyan University.

Lauren Enriquez, SFLA media strategist, challenged all the schools to break ties with PP or "stop calling themselves Christian."

"At some Christian schools," she said, "any pretense of being faithfully aligned with the Christian faith has been completely thrown out the window through deep, pervasive infestation of the abortion industry on their campus."

On the positive side, SFLA found 49 Christian universities not tied to PP and offering nonviolent pregnancy resources.

campusreform.org, 1/28/22

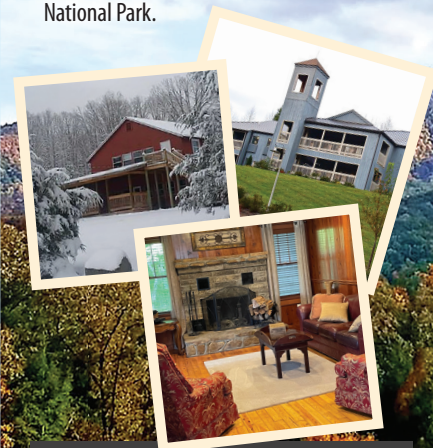


Where life-changing experiences can occur and people say yes to God

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Triple-vaxxed biopharma exec steps down

John Soriano was a top executive at Insmad, a biopharmaceutical company, until the company mandated that employees receive a COVID shot. Although he was triple-vaccinated, Soriano resigned from Insmad because he believed the “economically strong” were “taking advantage of the economically weak.”

“At the end of the day, it was a very easy decision to make,” Soriano told Laura Ingraham of Fox News. “Because when the company decided to promulgate the policy of getting vaxxed or you’re fired, I knew as a top executive, I’m obligated to support the decisions the company made, but I could not.”

Soriano went on to say that giving hard-working Americans an ultimatum of vaccinating or being fired “makes no sense economically, morally, or science-wise.”

foxnews.com, 1/25/22; americanwirenews.com, 1/25/22



Family opens boutique for foster kids

After adopting two daughters from the foster care system, Linda Durrence knows the struggles foster children face. One of those struggles is clothing. When the girls first arrived at Durrence’s home in Glennville, Georgia, they brought only a half-full garbage bag with ill-fitting clothes. With this image in mind, Durrence opened Blossom, a free boutique for children in need of clothing.

“We just want to be able to be the hands and feet of Jesus,” Durrence said. “We just want to make a difference in our community and our surrounding communities.” She depends on donations of cash and clothing to operate the ministry.

The store offers seven sets of clothing per child, but no payment is required. Families can return for more clothes



each quarter as the seasons change.

“We want other foster parents and foster children to know that the journey can be beautiful if everybody just pitches in and does a little bit,” she said.

foxnews.com, 2/16/22; breitbart.com, 2/17/22

Christian mom challenges Scholastic Press books for kids

Bethany Mandel, freelance journalist, editor, and homeschool mom, is challenging Scholastic Press on behalf of the minds and hearts of American children.

Since 1920, this well-known children’s publisher has been a trusted source for children’s reading materials. In recent years, Mandel says Scholastic Press has changed its agenda drastically. She warns parents the publishing giant is diligently promoting a Marxist-inspired, woke ideology, designed specifically to target innocent children.

“Our children’s souls,” Mandel said, “are in danger.”

During a Fox Business interview, Mandel shared several titles and book covers offered at local Scholastic school book fairs. Transgenderism, lesbianism, and an LGBTQ school club were a few topics of books available for young students to purchase.

As an alternative to Scholastic Press books, Mandel recommends parents browse the continually growing selection of titles offered by Christian conservative publisher Heroes of Liberty at heroesofliberty.com.

afn.net, 2/17/22





Ten-year-old ministers to cancer patients

When Sophie Enderton learned her grandfather had pancreatic cancer, her world changed. At 10 years old, Enderton began noticing others battling cancer and wanted to do something to help. Along with family and friends, she began creating “chemo comfort bags” filled with comforting items such as blankets, games, socks, and more.

In December, she delivered 10 bags to Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, in Buffalo, New York, where her grandfather was treated prior to his death. At press time, Enderton’s goal was to honor her late grandfather’s birthday by delivering 20 bags to adult and pediatric patients.

foxnews.com, 2/17/22

SBC president will not seek reelection

Ed Litton, president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the nation’s largest Protestant denomination, has announced that he will not seek reelection.

Pastor of Redemption Church in Mobile, Alabama, Litton is breaking with decades of tradition as SBC presidents typically serve two one-year terms.

Litton said in a formal statement that he felt God was calling him to continue working toward racial reconciliation, and “it is best for me to do so as a pastor and not from the office of president.”

His announcement came as the denomination grapples with liberal drift, racial tensions, and sexual abuse allegations. Litton himself is no stranger to scandal, as it was discovered shortly after his election that he had been guilty of years of sermon plagiarism, prompting immediate calls for his resignation.

Litton’s March 1 announcement was met with a wide range of reactions from prominent SBC leaders – some disappointed, some overjoyed, highlighting the deep divide the denomination faces.

christianpost.com, 3/2/22

Pro-abortion bill struck down

On February 28, pro-abortion supporters were dismayed that H.R. 3755, known as the Women’s Health Protection Act, was shot down in the U.S. Senate. The bill intended to nullify federal and state laws restricting abortion. According to American Family News, the bill would have “codified into federal law a right to abortion on demand.” Sixty votes were needed to move the legislation forward, but the vote was 48-46 against the bill.

afn.net, 3/1/22

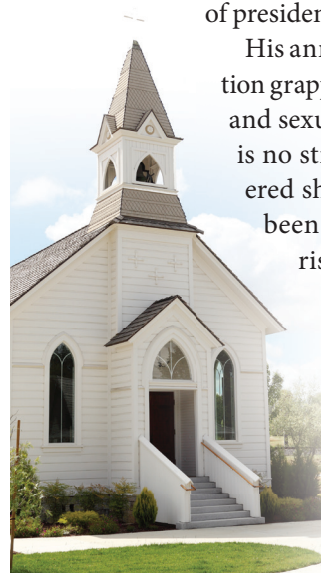
Nurse fired for being pro-life

For 18 years, Sandra Mendoza Rojas fulfilled her role as a pediatric nurse. But in 2015, everything changed. It was then that her employer, the Winnebago County Health Clinic (WCHC), instituted a new requirement forcing nurses to be trained to offer women abortion medication and referrals to abortion clinics.

A devout Catholic, Rojas refused the training and lost her job in the process. In February, an Illinois trial court ruled that WCHC must pay over \$374,000 to Rojas to cover attorney’s fees and damages.

According to Life News, the court ruled, “The Health Department improperly discriminated against Rojas by refusing to accommodate her objections of conscience in her existing job at the clinic.”

lifeneews.com, 2/21/22



SF school board implodes

San Francisco parents shocked the city and the nation in a February ballot that ousted three progressive, woke city school board members. Angry parents were



disgruntled that the board was more focused on a political agenda to persistently postpone reopening schools and to rename 44 schools with more politically

correct names.

Mayor London Breed (D) told NBC's **Meet the Press**, "In this particular case, the board neglected their primary responsibility ... which is to educate children."

The vote was overwhelming against Alison Collins (79%), Gabriela Lopez (75%), and Faauuga Moliga (73%).

[nationalreview.com, 2/2/22](#)

Pentagon considers enlisting nonbinary troops

The Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) was "quietly" asked by the Pentagon to examine the possibility of providing nonbinary individuals, those who identify as neither male nor female, the opportunity to join all branches of United States military service.

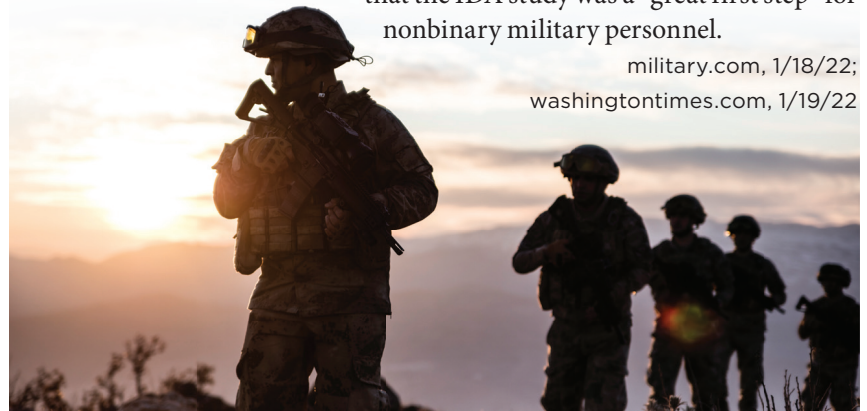
If implemented, the addition of nonbinary troops would be one of several recent controversial changes in sexually oriented military procedures. Of note, President Joe Biden quickly lifted President Donald Trump's ban on transgender troops in early 2021.

In December, the Air Force permitted personnel to include their "preferred pronouns" in their email signatures. Also, the Department of Veterans Affairs now allows transgender and nonbinary veterans to identify as such in official medical records.

One transgender Air Force officer, Lt. Col. Bree Fram, told [Military.com](#) that the IDA study was a "great first step" for nonbinary military personnel.

[military.com, 1/18/22;](#)

[washingtontimes.com, 1/19/22](#)



Fifty UMass profs shun woke vision

More than 50 mathematics and science faculty members have expressed alarm at a new vision statement crafted by leadership at University of Massachusetts Boston. The dissenting professors spoke up via an online letter that alleged the new statement defines UMass as dedicated to education "rooted in equity, environmental sustainability, [and] social and racial justice."

In a university mission statement adopted in 2010, UMass defined itself as "a public research university," with a "vibrant

multi-cultural educational environment" and a "broadly diverse campus community."

Boston Globe columnist Jeff Jacoby wrote that the 2010 mission statement repeatedly emphasized teaching, research, and service. But he said the current proposal "reeks with woke indoctrination."

Jacoby summarized the professors' concerns with the "political and activist code language with the unmistakable implication that at UMass Boston, the pursuit of knowledge and exchange of ideas is to be subordinated to a rigid left-wing agenda."

[pundicity.com, 3/6/22](#)



Christian bakers notch small victory, continue fight

Oregon Christian business owners Aaron and Melissa Klein have been embroiled in a nearly decade-long battle over their refusal to bake a cake for a same-sex wedding in 2013.

The initial punishment for their religious convictions was a \$135,000 fine – heaped on them by the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries.

The case recently made its way before a three-judge panel of the Oregon Court of Appeals. While the panel upheld the initial ruling that the bakery violated state law prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, it reversed the order for the couple to pay plaintiffs \$135,000 in damages.

The case is not over, however, as Circuit Judge Erin Lagesen, author of the panel opinion, said the panel will “remand for further proceedings related to remedy.”

Representing the Kleins, Stephanie Taub, senior counsel with First Liberty Institute, was displeased with the order for remand, stating, “the court is sending the case back to the very same agency for a do-over.”

First Liberty intends to appeal the ruling and go before the U.S. Supreme Court if necessary.

christianpost.com, 1/27/22;
afn.net, 1/31/22



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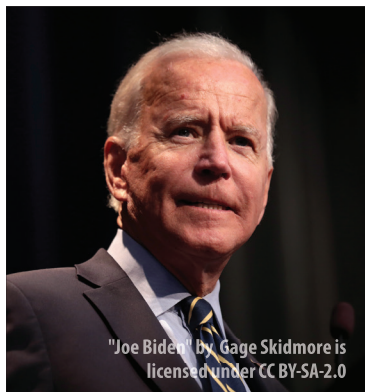
SamaritanMinistries.org/AFA · 877.584.8657

Gregg and Courtney, members since 2014

Biden pushes black voters away

President Joe Biden is “continuing to dig himself a hole in the black community,” declared Emery McClendon, a member of the Project 21 Black Leadership Network. McClendon’s observation followed the president’s State of the Union Address on March 1.

“Many black people are experiencing the worst of what’s going on right now in America,” McClendon said. He predicted that many black voters will stay home or abandon Democrat candidates at the polls this year.



"Joe Biden" by Gage Skidmore is licensed under CC BY-SA-2.0

afn.net, 3/4/22



Ministry wins suit against village

First Liberty Institute (FLI) announced in late February that it had secured a settlement on behalf of Light of the World Gospel Ministries in its suit against the Village of Walthill, Nebraska.

“[The church] will transform dilapidated and undeveloped property into a space to serve all village residents,” said Roger Byron, FLI senior counsel.

The ministry filed suit in 2018 after the village repeatedly rejected or revoked already approved property and building permits. The U.S. Department of Justice also filed a suit against the village in 2020.

“We are grateful that we can now bring the light and love of Jesus to our community and help revitalize our town,” said Pastor Paul Malcomson of Light of the World.

firstliberty.org, 2/17/22

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Methodist seminary promotes Wiccan

According to Dr. Matt Ayars, president of Wesley Biblical Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi, the Denver, Colorado, Methodist Iliff School of Theology has abandoned biblical teaching.

Ayars said the school receives more than \$800,000 a year from the United Methodist Ministerial Education Fund, yet Iliff focuses on pagan religions.

"[They have] students who are Hindus, universalists, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, atheists, [and] agnostics," Ayars told AFN News. "One of their senior M.Div. students served at the Wiccan church, which would be a witch church, a paganist church."

afn.net, 2/22/22



SPIRITUAL HERITAGE TOURS 2022

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- › Visit Arlington National Cemetery
- › Visit Museum of the Bible (during free time)

For more details including itinerary and costs, as well as information on our tour of Jamestown, Yorktown, and Williamsburg that precedes the Washington tour, visit:

spiritualheritagetours.com



Tour led by AFA's Tim Wildmon
with commentary by historian
Stephen McDowell

Safe and sound

Parents Television and Media Council works to protect young eyes, minds, and hearts.

BY HANNAH MEADOR

“Our vision across all political spectrums ... is a media environment that is safe and sound for children and families,” said Tim Winter.

For 27 years, Parents Television Council (PTC) has been a leading advocate for family-friendly, kid-friendly television. It was an offspring of Media Research Center, and it recently broadened its focus, expanding its name to Parents Television and Media Council.

Today as always, PTC intends to protect children from the deluge of offensive entertainment content that can be found on any screen. In a recent interview, PTC president Tim Winter sat down with *The Stand* to discuss the organization’s efforts as they take a stand to protect young eyes and minds.

The Stand: How did PTC begin?

Tim Winter: Our founder was Brent Bozell, and [he was] one of the godfathers of the conservative movement in the 1980s. He partnered with our cofounder, Steve Allen, who was liberal. But as the first host of *The Tonight Show*, Steve was a Hollywood icon and pioneer in the television industry.

Those two people probably never checked the same box on the ballot or agreed on much of anything. But what they did agree on was that the entertainment media culture was toxic to children and dangerous to their well-being. So the mission [became] protecting children from the graphic sex, violence, and profanity that has been so pervasive in entertainment.

TS: How has PTC seen media and culture change since those early days?

TW: It really has changed so much. When we think back to 1995, most

people consumed their entertainment through major broadcast television networks, the *four* major broadcast television networks. That kind of gave way to a growing number of cable channels in the 1990s and early 2000s. In a couple of decades, we went from a 25-cable to a 500-cable channel universe. Then, cable gave way to streaming.

When we began PTC, our mission was squarely focused on sex, violence, and profanity on primetime broadcast TV. That’s what children were watching. The [graphic content] at that time was mostly programming that may not have been intended for children, but it was consumed by them.

[Since then], it has changed from sex, violence, and profanity for adults but kids were seeing it, to kids being in the scenes. From that, it morphed into kids delivering the explicit content. Now, we see the outright sexual exploitation of children. All for the sake of entertainment.

TS: What are some of the successes PTC has seen?

TW: We’ve been very involved over the years with public policy efforts in Washington, D.C., where there are legislative or



regulatory remedies that are available to further PTC's mission. We were instrumental in securing the enforcement of broadcast indecency laws of the Federal Communication Commission, the FCC.

We've helped pass the Child Safe Viewing Act, the Family Movie Act, and other pieces of legislation that help protect children from toxic programming. We also work very feverishly to make sure that television sponsors – the advertisers – are held accountable for the television programming they sponsor.

TS: What are some of the concerns PTC has with streaming?

TW: Actually, there are two very big concerns we face with streaming that we did not face with broadcasting and most cable networks. Number one is [the absence of] advertisers. Number two is [absence of] FCC regulatory oversight.

The FCC has oversight of broadcast television and can enforce indecency standards. But it cannot enforce indecency standards on streaming because it comes through the internet. It's a different legal animal, and unfortunately, there are no FCC guidelines. However, one thing that we have been advocating for years is one standard content rating system.

Each TV network decides how to rate each show, and they almost always rate it too young, as opposed to too old. They rate things with really graphic violence, sex, and profanity as appropriate for children to watch. They do it because if they rate it accurately, advertisers won't support it, and viewers won't watch.

We've been working for wholesale reform of the rating system and its oversight. And that's something that we continue to work on. We want one system. Parents are asked to learn motion picture, TV, video game, and music content rating systems. There should be one

“Wherever technology goes, PTC will be there to help parents protect their children.”

TIM WINTER

standard content rating system across all forms of media, which includes, we believe, streaming media. If parents are going to be tasked with being better parents, then give them something they can understand and implement.

TS: Where do you see PTC in the next 10 years?

TW: We don't yet know what new technological advances will be made or what the future holds in terms of how entertainment will be produced or distributed. But what we do know is that technology will be there. And children will be consuming it.

If we're going to be able to help parents be better parents, and if we're going to help protect the innocence of our children, we have to be nimble and able to quickly pivot and address any concern that pops up in terms of toxic entertainment. The reality is, wherever technology goes, PTC will be there to help parents protect their children.

TS: How would you encourage individuals to get engaged in the culture war?


TW: Every voice matters. Once you learn about a campaign, tell your friends.

You never know who you're talking to and what impact they might be able to have. I would also encourage readers not to underestimate the clout they have with their voice, with a few strokes of their keyboard on their computer to take action. Speak up and speak out. It's vitally important. Every voice truly does matter.

TS: Is there anything else you would like to add?

TW: The most important thing I can do as president of PTC is to make sure that parents across America are armed with information about what's on television. And I think we have done exceptionally well over the years at providing research and data for parents to help them make more informed viewing choices for their families.

Parents sometimes don't understand how important it is in terms of what their children are consuming with entertainment media. They buckle their kids in their cars with seatbelts, lock their doors at night, and try to give them healthy food. But they stop short of understanding the importance of what their children are putting into their minds and how it impacts their long-term health.

If we're going to try to build up children to be our next leaders, we have to give them the moral compass as well. 

PTC resources for parents: Click that mouse!

“The more people you have clicking that mouse, the greater the impact,” PTC President Tim Winter said. “AFA has been instrumental over the years. [Like you,] when we recognize something that needs to be addressed, we reach out.”

The Stand editor Randall Murphree repaid the compliment: “I remember depending on Media Research Center and PTC for support when we were both monitoring television's four major networks. They've been a faithful ministry partner through the decades.”

Winters' mouse reference is to the thorough and frequent email alerts available for parents to take a stand on entertainment issues that impact their children.

To find PTC's superb resources and help to make your voice count in the culture, go to parentstv.org or call 800.882.6868.

For more alerts on family entertainment issues, go to AFA's onemillionmoms.com.



Actor embraces role as agent of change in a culture of chaos



Kirk Cameron talks about the power of God working in the hearts of His people.

BY REBECCA DAVIS

Many know him best as the mischievous Mike Seaver from the 1980s sitcom **Growing Pains**. Others recognize him as Buck from the **Left Behind** movies or Caleb from Sherwood Pictures' **Fireproof**. But in real life, actor and filmmaker Kirk Cameron is a born-again Christian who is making a difference for Christ in today's culture.

Cameron, 51, grew up an atheist and was invited to church by a friend when he was around 17 years old. He left church with a lot of questions, so he started reading a book titled *More Than a Carpenter* by Josh McDowell. Then one day as he was driving, he pulled off to the side of the road and just cried out to God for the first time. (See AFA Journal at afajournal.org, 3/05.)

From that point forward, Cameron began reading the Bible and going to church and “something just completely captured my heart about the message of the gospel,” he said.

Evidence for revival

New life in Christ brought new purpose to Cameron's life. He married actress Chelsea Noble, also a believer, who played his onscreen girlfriend in **Growing Pains**, and they have six chil-

dren. They remain a part of the entertainment industry and use it as a platform to further the kingdom. Cameron is very bold and outspoken about his Christian beliefs, and all of his projects have an eternal focus and value.

“It's harder to do it God's way, but it's so worth it,” Cameron told *The Stand* during a recent visit to *The Stand* offices at AFA. “God redeems and revives His world through the hearts and the homes of the people who are devoted to Him.”

Cameron is quick to admit that America is in bad shape right now, but he does not make that assessment out of defeat. He truly believes the country is “teed up for revival right now,” and he is hopeful that God is going to open the heavens and do miraculous things.

“Historically, revivals have come roughly every 50 years from what I understand from the historians that I trust,” Cameron explained in reference to revivals from the Great Awakening in the early 1900s to the Jesus Movement of the 1970s.

“And they always come at times of moral collapse and spiritual decline. ... So what I'm hearing and what I'm seeing is, historically, God uses the pressures

of this world to get the attention of His people” – which is exactly what Cameron is seeing happen throughout the nation.

Efforts for change

At the beginning of 2021, God called Cameron to start American Campfire Revival (americancampfirerevival.com) at the same time that President Joe Biden rolled out his new administration's 100-day plan.

“So I thought ... I'm going to make use of the time and come up with my own 100-day plan,” Cameron said. “I'm going to make a campfire in my backyard and do what God says. His executive orders are ‘If My people will humble themselves and pray, turn from their wicked ways and pray, I'll heal their land.’ I thought, OK, so let's do that.”

Cameron went live on Facebook every evening for 100 days and taught through the book titled *The American Covenant: The Untold Story*. Written by Christian historian Marshall Foster, the book “talks about what our founders knew, and we've forgotten,” Cameron said. It explains how “this nation would never remain free and will fall apart if we ever get away from our covenant with God and with one another.”


“It's harder to do it God's way, but it's so worth it. God redeems and revives His world through the hearts and the homes of the people who are devoted to Him.”

KIRK CAMERON

Cameron's efforts piqued an interest, and millions began joining him on social media each night and continue doing so even now. In addition to national covenants, his campfire meetings also cover marriage, parenting, and individual covenants, and the importance of renewing those as families. The online meetings led to a tour that included a large bonfire at the National Monument to the Forefathers in Plymouth, Massachusetts, (See AFA Journal, 7/21.) as well as large gatherings at farms in Texas, barns in North Carolina, and large churches across the country. (More 2022 dates are to be announced.)

"People were just coming out of the



woodwork to exercise their faith and their patriotism," Cameron said. "I sought to bring our faith to bear on what is going on in the country, not just by complaining, but by saying, 'Let's go back to the recipe for blessing and prosperity and security, back to God's way.'" 

The value of family

Over the years, actor Kirk Cameron has played a lot of roles, but he values most being a husband of 30 years to Chelsea and father to Jack, Bella, Anha, Luke, Olivia, and James – all now young adults.

The couple's children are stairsteps, each one about a year apart in age. They adopted the first four back-to-back, and then had two by birth. (See AFA Journal, 5/05.) After years of homeschooling and all that comes with raising six children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, the couple is now in a new season of life.

"I'm getting my girlfriend back after 20-something years," Cameron said laughing. "[But] we're so grateful that

we were able to spend a lot of time with our kids. Now we're seeing them have healthy perspectives ... in a culture that's very unhealthy."

Three of the Cameron children are now married. Jack and his wife work for Focus on the Family where he is a video producer and she is a pro-life writer and event coordinator. Bella is also married and is a singer and former worship director. Anha is a newlywed who used to work for the pro-life organization Save the Storks. Luke is a college student studying communications and working toward opening his own adoption grant agency. Both James and Olivia are recent high school graduates who are in Nashville learning about music and songwriting.

Protecting the unborn and doing kingdom work is very personal for the Cameron family. Chelsea is an adopted child herself who "was one doctor appointment away from not existing," Cameron explained.

If she had been

aborted, the Camerons would not be who they are today – a family who values and protects the gift of life.

Cameron added, "Our hope is in the power of God working in the hearts of His people. And it starts in the home and in the family."

Current and upcoming projects from Kirk Cameron

► **American Campfire Revival** – A night of revival under the stars. Live in person some nights and every night on Facebook Live.

americancampfirerevival.com,
facebook.com/kirkcameron

► **Takeaways** – A TBN talk show in which Kirk Cameron interviews Christian influencers about pressing issues facing the family of faith and provides actionable steps people can take to make a difference at home and in their community. Airst at 8 p.m. CT, Mondays on TBN.

tbn.org/programs/takeaways-kirk-cameron

► **Homeschool documentary** – An upcoming documentary that takes a positive look at the ever-growing homeschool movement and how homeschooling can be for families from all walks of life. Set to release this summer as a one-night Fathom event.

► **LifeMark** – An upcoming feature film from Kirk Cameron and the Kendrick Brothers that's based on a true story and highlights the value and preciousness of life in the womb and the beauty of adoption. Set to release in theaters this fall. Look for more information in upcoming issues of *The Stand*.



Exalt the Lord who has established us

— COLOSSIANS 2:6-7

The president of National Day of Prayer challenges Christians to participate on May 5.

BY RANDALL MURPHREE

Kathy Branzell was blessed with Christian parents who taught her well and modeled a Christian lifestyle. From childhood, the family's church was a focus of family life.

"In fact," Branzell told *The Stand*, "My husband and I met each other at church when I was 11 and he was 13." Now they have raised a daughter and a son (both adults), whose lives continue the family legacy.

"They've had their own journey, and they don't have their parents' faith," Branzell emphasized. "They have their own faith. I'm grateful for that."

In the ministry arena, Branzell has been moved by God into the office of president of the National Day of Prayer (NDOP), a plateau of leadership that allows her to impact the spiritual condition of the nation.

A National Day of Prayer observance was signed into law by President Harry S. Truman in 1952. In 1988 President Ronald Reagan designated the first Thursday in May as the day for the observation. Branzell shared the following insights into the need for prayer in the nation's troubled times.

The Stand: What is the mission of NDOP and how is it achieved?

Kathy Branzell: We exist to mobilize unified public prayer for America.

As a staff, we get to steer and steward the National Day of Prayer every year ... [along with] the 20,000 volunteers God has blessed us with.

TS: Why is the big event context necessary? Why not just urge people to pray always?

KB: The big day is a celebration of every other day of prayer. There is power in gathering in agreement and praying for very specific things. So we get together and guide those prayer gatherings. Last year, and in years before COVID, we were having tens of thousands of ... events across the nation on National Day of Prayer.

TS: What are some evidences of the Holy Spirit's inspiration for this event?

KB: We see more and more people drawn to prayer. In our history, this has been certainly a season of great fear, of great hurt, of great hopelessness. And we are seeing such a huge increase in people calling our office, emailing us, texting us, asking us to pray not for them, but to teach them how to pray.

And we are grateful to see ... intercessors who aren't just praying for themselves and what they want, the "gimme-gimme" prayers, but the exalt-the-Lord prayers. And that exalting, that praise, has brought a lot of peace to people. Just catching a glimpse of the character of our Creator and praising Him, we see that glimpse bringing hope and faith and joy and strength and

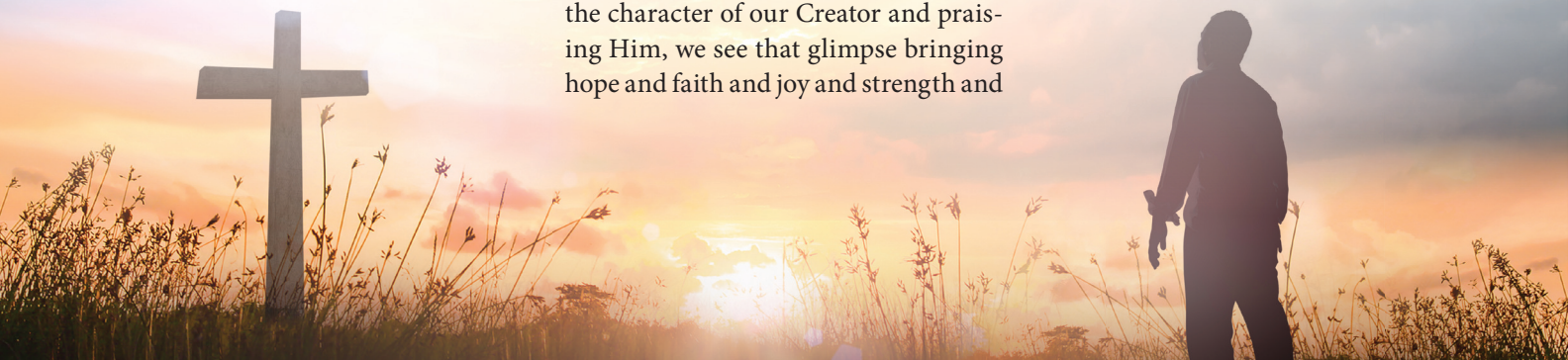
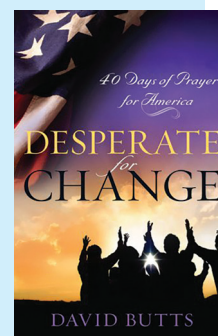
TS: Why the emphasis on praise this year?

KB: The theme for the 2022 National Day of Prayer is Exalt the Lord who has established us, based on Colossians 2:6-7. This year, we wanted to launch praise ... for us to start talking more about what a great and mighty and wonderful God we worship – a God who created us, who established us to live for such a time as this. And we are hoping to set that cadence for prayer in exalting the Lord. 📖

Praying for America

In *Desperate for Change: 40 Days of Prayer for America*, David Butts encourages believers to lift up the nation with 40 devotions and Scriptures to guide prayers. For more prayer resources (personal, group, special focuses, and more), visit David Butts and his wife Kim at Harvest Prayer Ministries (harvestprayer.com), the ministry they founded in 1993.

See pp. 33 and 35 for more resources on prayer.



Captivating caverns, Christian context, family fun

Below ground or above, Desoto Caverns park offers adventure for all.

BY MATTHEW WHITE

“I believe that small town attractions like ours can draw people out of the ordinary day-to-day and into the extraordinary of God’s beautiful nature and a small-town quaint feel that is so reviving.”

So said Joy Sorensen describing Desoto Caverns, the Childersburg, Alabama, family theme park she owns and operates in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains.

The park offers a multitude of attractions such as gemstone panning, rock wall climbing, a splash pad, archery, train rides, and digging for crystals.

Visitors are also treated to live entertainment as they meander through the park – things like simple “magic” tricks, fire juggling, and blacksmithing to name a few. And that is just the above-ground offerings.

The main draw is the cave, which boasts one expanse over 100 yards long and an impressive height of 120 feet.

Sorensen recently spoke with *The Stand* about the family business, its history, and her dreams for the future of Desoto Caverns.

The Stand: Could you share a brief history of Desoto Caverns?

Joy Sorensen: DeSoto Caverns is the most historic cavern in the country, home of a vast range of significant events and relics including a mastodon bone and over 2,000 years of Native American history, as well as fascinating accounts from the Age of Exploration, Civil War,

Prohibition era, and more.

If you enjoy stories of rich cultures, daring adventures, and law-breaking bootleggers, this is the perfect place to immerse yourself for a day of learning and fun.

TS: How did the Caverns end up with your family?

JS: My great-great-grandmother, Ida Mathis, purchased the cave in 1912, but my father, Allen Mathis, was the first in the family to show the caverns to the public and ... add special attractions and experiences for visitors.

TS: Why is the park’s Homeschool Days event important to you?

JS: I have a special place in my heart for our Homeschool Days because some of my favorite years of education were when I was being homeschooled. I know the passion homeschooling families have for a well-rounded education, and we want to provide a special opportunity at a discounted rate for them.

Our website has the most thorough free online educational platform in the state of Alabama to help students and teachers prepare for their visit, and even continue learning long after.

TS: How important is the gospel to your family and your family business?


JS: My great-great-grandmother was known as an evangelist and went far and wide to share the gospel through the gifts God gave her.



Staff writer Mathew White and his wife Whitney recently took their five sons and another family full of boys for a long day at Desoto Caverns.

The caverns have been covered in prayer for over a hundred years in my family, and it’s our hope that as guests explore this hidden gem, they are in awe of the detail and majesty of the Creator.

We pray daily for our guests and for our team and thank God for the gift of His creativity on display.

Many people describe their visits as having a spiritual impact on them. We hope this is due to all the love and prayer and worship nights we’ve had in the caverns as we hope to steward well what God has given us. 

Plan your trip

Childersburg, Alabama, is a short commute from Birmingham and Talladega Speedway, and it is surrounded by regional, historical, and family attractions.

“We are thrilled to be opening a mainstage theatrical production in the caverns this year,” said Joy Sorenson. “This production will share the history and legends of the caverns and the people who have lived and loved in it.”

Learn more at desotocaverns.com, info@desotocavernspark.com, or 256.378.7252

Depression and anxiety, causes and cures

A Christian doctor discusses the roots of depression and anxiety and how they are best treated.

BY ROBERT YOUNGBLOOD

Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. ... It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life (Philippians 4:6-7, MSG).

Worry is a war on peace – especially if one is a Christian. In today's fractious world, worry adds fuel and flames that invite anxiety and depression. World news coverage 24/7 spawns a cacophony of predictions of worst-case scenarios that threaten healthy living.

Then there is COVID. Few things have so shaken the world's foundations – churches, economies, schools, governments, and personal interactions. Still, these factors alone may not cause anxiety or depression.

Dale A. Matthews, M.D., author of *The Faith Factor: Proof of the Healing Power of Prayer*, told *The Stand*, "I view medical treatment and spiritual treatment as two sides of the same coin."

Former associate professor of medicine at Georgetown University School of Medicine, Matthews also participates in the Speaker's Bureau for the Christian Medical and Dental Associations (CMDA).

Too often, it seems Christians presume that depression and anxiety are the result of spiritual or emotional issues. In reality, an examination is needed to discern if physical problems are also a factor.

A deacon who was experiencing extreme fatigue once told Matthews that he *couldn't* be depressed – as if he were exempt because of his faith. The doctor simply asked the man, "Can you think of some great men in the Bible who were depressed?" How about David, Isaiah, Job, Elijah, and Jeremiah to name a few?

Matthews explained that if physical reasons for anxiety or depression are identified and treated, it becomes more effective to address mental and spiritual concerns.

Would the same community that creates a stigma for seeking medical help for depression discourage a diabetic from taking life-saving insulin? Or someone with thyroid problems for seeking treatment? Both diabetes and thyroid issues are proven sometimes to cause anxiety and depression. Knowing that, would others still automatically discount physical factors in the treatment process?

James 3:17 says, "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good

fruits, impartial and sincere." Reason, mercy, and impartiality prompt a full investigation into the cause of any illness.

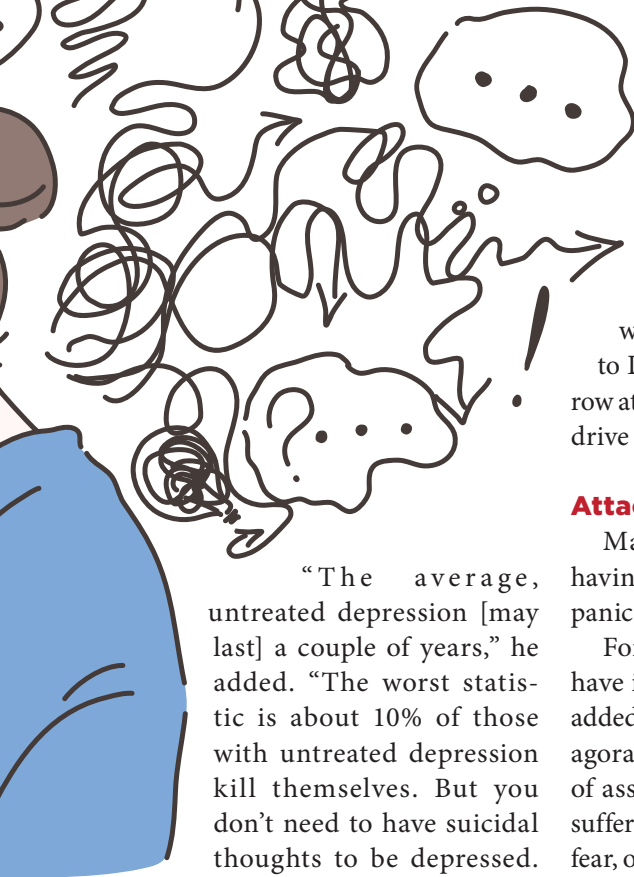
The physician is morally obligated to explore every possible path of wisdom in treating patients. "A good physician who is open to a spiritual approach should be able to determine whether or not your anxiety or your depression is related to a medical illness, emotional illness, or a spiritual issue," Matthews said. "Medicine can help take away the pain of depression and anxiety enough so you can get into the spiritual and psychological work."

The basic tests a physician might perform include blood work, a general physical exam, and possibly an interview or history if depression is suspect. The latter might include a Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2) to analyze the patient's health over the past two weeks. (See sidebar.)

Downed by depression

"The clinical definition for depression is two weeks where at least half of those days you're feeling down or you're not able to enjoy things that you usually enjoy," Matthews said.





that they need help. Matthews said the intervening friends will likely say something like, “You are not the same person that you were last year. We love you and want to help you. And we’ve talked to Dr. Smith. He will see you tomorrow at 9:00. We want you to go, and we’ll drive you there.”

Attacked by anxiety

Matthews explained anxiety as having three distinct tracks – phobias, panic attacks, and generalized.

For example, agoraphobia seems to have increased because of COVID, he added. The word is derived from Greek *agora* meaning “marketplace,” “places of assembly,” or “open space.” Phobia sufferers avoid those places due to worry, fear, or anxiety, which often leads to self-isolation that may lead to depression.

“Panic disorders or attacks occur when people get episodic bouts of severe anxiety that might last 30 minutes to 2 hours at most,” Matthews said. “Then it goes away.”


Such attacks can frustrate patients who, after a panic attack, go to the ER,

where a battery of tests shows no severe medical emergency. They may feel like they are about to die. But Matthews said this disorder is very treatable with medication *and* counseling.

“Generalized anxiety is where you feel jittery, irritable, anxious all the time – most of the time,” Matthews explained. He advises that if one feels this way for two weeks or more, then seek medical help.

As a Christian, Matthews depends on the power of prayer. He sometimes advises Christian patients – even as they take their medication – to “pray Colossians 3:17 where whatever we do in word or deed, to do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus – giving thanks to God the Father.”

Matthews recommends additional scriptural principles: 1) “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10) and “You have not because you ask not” (James 4:2).

Praying the prayers and practicing the principles of God’s Word may not always be easy, but they will always be the wise thing to do. As Dr. Matthews prescribes, combine prayer, appropriate counsel, and medical treatment – and better health is attainable. 

“The average, untreated depression [may last] a couple of years,” he added. “The worst statistic is about 10% of those with untreated depression kill themselves. But you don’t need to have suicidal thoughts to be depressed. Those thoughts are only one

of nine criteria for depression, and you only need five of nine to make a diagnosis of depression.” The PHQ-9 addresses those criteria. (See sidebar.)

Some people who are depressed cling to denial. For them, friends and family sometimes intervene to help them admit

More insights

Doctors often initially review the patient’s last two weeks for signs of depression. “Some data,” Dr. Dale A. Matthews said, “shows people are actually more honest on written or computer surveys.” Physicians often employ screening tools such as a Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ). But the questions are non-threatening and don’t require a narrative response. For example, a PHQ-2 asks two simple questions:

1. Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by little interest or pleasure in doing things?
2. Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by feeling down, depressed, or hopeless?

For each question, a patient chooses one response from these four: “Not at all,” “Several days,” “More than half the days,” or “Nearly every day.” The two responses guide the doctor in determining if the patient merits a PHQ-9 with nine questions. Matthews revealed that clinical depression may be diagnosed based on the analysis of the patient’s nine responses.

More information

- ▶ At press time, this link would take the reader to the questions on a PHQ-9: mdcalc.com/phq-9-patient-health-questionnaire-9.
- ▶ Dr. Dale A. Matthews’ book *The Faith Factor* is available (on Kindle only) at christianbook.com. If ordering, be alert for similar or identical titles.
- ▶ Contact American Association of Christian Counselors at aacc.net or 800.526.8673.
- ▶ Contact the Christian Medical and Dental Associations at cmda.org or 888.230.2637. CMDA does not provide healthcare services.
- ▶ Contact the Suicide Prevention Hotline at suicidepreventionlifeline.org or 800.273.8255.



Outreach group serves, supports missionaries

International Outreach Ministries helps fund missionaries to carry the gospel worldwide.

BY ADDIE GRACE PUTNAM

THE STAND INTERN

"I have the greatest job in the world," declared Michael McCarty, president of International Outreach Ministries (IOM). "I serve heroes."

Heroes such as Timo and Alison Rosenbach, who serve the people of Germany through a radio ministry. Heroes like Charlyn and Enrique Mejia, who welcome the street children of Costa Rica into their home and provide them with a stable parent-child relationship. Heroes like Sokion and Katie Ki, who serve in Cambodia through an international school and help local churches to teach the Bible.

Heroes like Michael and Emma Kenyon, a missionary couple working with Hard Places Community, an IOM partner ministry in Cambodia. This husband-and-wife team uses their unique gifts as a chef and an artist, respectively, to share the gospel with the hurting people of Cambodia.

Michael equips young men with cooking skills that will enable them to find wholesome employment while Emma is the head of an arts community center, where she leads art classes as a means of bringing healing to victims in the sex trade.

These families are only a few of the missionaries being served by IOM to spread the gospel among the nations.

Giving for going

"We do two things," McCarty shared. "We provide financial, fiduciary accountability to donors and to missionary associates." Put simply, this means IOM ensures the money donors give goes to an actual ministry.

"The second thing we do," McCarty went on, "is we provide relational encouragement." For him, this involves visiting missionaries in their countries of service and making sure they're as effective as possible in their ministry. Often, this means giving a week or two off for vacation.

"Of course [missionaries] shouldn't be the only people in the world who aren't allowed to go on holiday," McCarty pointed out.

"We're not a sending organization," he added emphatically. "We call ourselves a service support organization." The ministry exists to handle the financial aspect of missions work, enabling the missionaries to focus on their primary purpose for being overseas by providing funds to supplement what the mission-

aries themselves and their sending churches are able to raise. IOM may also fund overseas ministries where IOM missionaries serve.

It is unique among similar agencies because of its willingness to assist families with young children. "A lot of missions organizations only accept families with teenagers," McCarty explained. "If it seems to be a solid home, then that's the main factor for us."

IOM was founded about 35 years ago by Paul Petrie, who would eventually go on to become a missionary to Belgium. He recognized the need among smaller churches for financial assistance in sending out missionaries and founded IOM to

help churches meet these crucial needs. It is a non-profit agency headquartered in McComb, Mississippi.

Strategies for serving

IOM is strategic and intentional about the missionaries it selects for support. While the ministry is non-denomina-

We provide financial, fiduciary accountability to donors and to missionary associates. [And] we provide relational encouragement. ... We're not a sending organization. We call ourselves a service support organization.

MICHAEL MCCARTY

tional, it does require all potential missionaries to go through a thorough application process complete with a background check and a personal interview with either McCarty or one of the other board members. During the interview, applicants are asked about their previous missions experience and their reasoning for wanting to go overseas.

Operationally, IOM's strategy is to partner with ministries that already exist in foreign countries. Hard Places Community has missionary locations in several countries including its significant presence in Cambodia where IOM missionary Alli Mellon leads ministries to reach those who are involved in human trafficking and sex trafficking. The missions team there also works with street children, helping them get into a stable home. Several IOM missionaries serve there.

Another key IOM partner is the Kenya Ministry Training Institute (KMTI), which teaches Kenyan believers how to read the Bible and live according to biblical principles.

A key issue among believers in Kenya is lack of discipleship, but IOM mission-

I know all of our missionaries by name ... If you told me today we had two more missionaries that wanted to join IOM, I would say, 'Let me make sure I can care for them first.'

MICHAEL MCCARTY

ary Larry Neese and the staff of KMTI are determined to change that. Their training isn't limited to theological matters; part of it involves things like teaching the men to be monogamous. The institute ultimately helps raise up leaders who will train other leaders.

Real relationships

Relationships are at the heart of IOM's ministry. "I know all of our missionaries by name," McCarty shared, "and I know their kids." Each board member is assigned a specific group of [single or family] missionary units to pray for and help in whatever capacity is needed, including leading teams to the field to help with projects. The board members take an active role in the lives of their assigned missionaries.

This relational aspect of IOM is possible only because of the small size of the organization. McCarty and the other board members are passionate about establishing a personal connection with each of their missionary units.

"If you told me today we had two more missionaries that wanted to join IOM," McCarty told *The Stand*, "I would say,

'Let me make sure I can care for them first.'" If the ministry couldn't give a new applicant

the same level of support as their other missionaries, IOM would encourage the applicant to look at other organizations.

COVID concerns


In a true testament to God's grace, IOM has not been greatly impacted by the continuing COVID crisis. "Our total donations haven't gone down at all," McCarty said. "We've been able to fund everything that's before us, just like we always have."

Some missionaries have been more affected by COVID than others. For example, one family recently returned to their country of service and had to quarantine for a few days upon re-entry due to 10 people from their plane testing positive.

"But that's more of a nuisance," McCarty stated. "I think of the apostle Paul being shipwrecked. Having to delay five days in a hotel – it's not the worst thing that can happen to you."

Fortunately, even through the pandemic, IOM and its missionaries have been able to press forward with the gospel.

The ministry's goal has never been to shoot for a specific set of numbers, but it has grown without any planned effort on its own. Fifteen years ago, twelve missionary units were serving with IOM; that number has since increased to about 100.

IOM continues strong in its mission to share the gospel in some of the hardest places in the world: to send 1 gospel to 26 nations in 7 world regions by 100 heroes. 

Meet IOM missionaries

To provide financial support and services to missionaries, IOM depends on donations. President Michael McCarty encourages readers to spend some time on the website (iom-online.com) and meet the missionaries. To read about each family or missionary funded by IOM, click on the "Missionaries" tab. Every month, each missionary receives a report of who gave to help them share the gospel. All gifts to IOM are tax deductible.



CORE VALUES SPOTLIGHT

Reporting on such gospel outreaches as International Outreach Ministries illustrates AFA's first core value – Evangelism and discipleship: AFA aims to evangelize the lost and disciple the believer. Learn more at afa.net.

‘What I want to pass down’

This father defines a legacy worth passing down based solidly on God’s Word.



BY LAUREN BLACK BRAGG

How are parents to combat the ways of this world that are so readily accessible to today’s children and youth? Not just accessible, but flaunted and paraded in front of them, promising all of the riches and satisfaction and happiness the world claims to offer.

All that ... for just one easy payment: their soul.

Earlier this year, Wil Addison, AFA director of special initiatives, posted “What I Want to Pass Down,” a powerful commentary on **The Stand** (afa.net/thestand). In it, he draws principles for parenting from Old Testament prophets Jeremiah and Daniel to encourage and guide parents in the challenges they face today.

“I often think about the book of Daniel when thinking about the times we are living in,” wrote Addison. “It feels like we are on the brink of being captives here or like we are living in a modern-day Babylon.”

The Stand magazine shares the following excerpts from Addison’s post in an abbreviated Q&A format along with Scriptures he emphasized.

The Stand: When you say current times are reminiscent of the times of Daniel, what do you mean by that?

Wil Addison: Jeremiah was a prophet who God spoke through for over 40 years [warning His people of the coming Babylonian captivity]. When I think of Daniel and his friends – Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael – I believe their parents listened to the prophet

Jeremiah based on the fruit produced in their sons.

It’s obvious that these young boys were trained to go to Babylon but not to become Babylonians.

I was thinking about what I would want to impress upon my children looking at a modern Babylon on the horizon ... this is not the time for lying back but a time for vigilance as we approach the discipleship of our children.

The Word: Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king’s court; and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans (Daniel 1:3).

TS: What are some things you would like to pass down to your children?

WA: *Be excellent.*

The Bible clearly lays out that these young men were excellent spiritually, physically, and academically.

The Word: [They were] youths in

whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king’s court; and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans (Daniel 1:4).

TS: How can youth be excellent in today’s culture?

WA: *Do your best in school. Be smart.*

Learn practical things and get your education. See how your whole self, especially your mind, when given over to God, is a great tool in His hand.

When I think of someone loving God with their mind, I think of George Washington Carver [1864-1943]. He believed that Providence guided his scientific investigations and that those investigations led to a better understanding of God and His handiwork.

The Word: And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your heart. This is the great and foremost commandment” (Matthew 22:37-38).

TS: What else makes you think of Carver?

WA: In an age when scientists had

I often think about the book of Daniel when thinking about the times we are living in. ... like we are living in a modern-day Babylon.

WIL ADDISON

begun to view science and religion as mutually exclusive, Carver stood out for his insistence that science provides proof of God's existence.

He often referred to his lab as "God's little workshop." He did not consider himself a scientific genius; that is, he did not take credit for discovering one or another product.

Instead, he considered himself a conduit for divine inspiration and revelation: "[I] ask the Great Creator ... to permit me to speak to Him through the three great kingdoms of the world, which He has created – the animal, mineral, and vegetable kingdoms."

The New York Times, strongly disagreeing with Carver's juxtaposition of science and divine influence, published an editorial claiming that Carver's comments revealed a "complete lack of the scientific spirit."

If "scientific spirit" means excluding God from the investigation of His own creation, then, in that skewed sense, the Times was right. For Carver plainly considered God and science inseparable.

He once wrote, "I am not interested in science or anything else that leaves God out of it."

TS: What additional elements of excellence do you hope your children learn from your legacy?

WA: *Be resolute.*

That they would not be defiled by the king's food (Daniel 1:6-17).

That they would not bow to Nebuchadnezzar's image (Daniel 3:16-18).

That when faced with moments of compromise, they would not compromise!

Be prayerful and keep good company.

In Daniel 2, when Nebuchadnezzar said he would kill all the wise men in the land if none could tell him his dream and interpret it, Daniel got with his friends, and they sought the Lord. They prayed. When things got hot, they were good, godly company for each other.

The Word: ... then Daniel went to

his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, about the matter, so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon (Daniel 2:17-18).

TS: Do you have any last charges for today's young people?

WA: *Keep yourself unstained from the world.*


Don't let this worldly system rub off on you. You are peculiar because you

You are peculiar because you have placed your faith in Christ. Be alright with being different for righteousness' sake, and do the things that please the Lord.

WIL ADDISON

have placed your faith in Christ. Be alright with being different for righteousness' sake, and do the things that please the Lord.

The Word: If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our

God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world (James 1:26-27). 

Left: Meeke and Wil pray together at the 2021 MFL conference. Right: Meeke speaks at the 2021 MFL Conference.



MFL22 Conference coming in July

Wil Addison is founder and director of AFA's Marriage Family Life Conference July 7-9 in Tupelo, Mississippi. The two-day event will equip believers to defend biblical truth and minister to culture-wearied adults and children (ages 4-17).

Impact a Life is the theme of this year's conference where adults will engage in information-packed sessions while kids and youth will participate in their own age-appropriate sessions.

For more information, to register, or to become an MFL22 vendor, visit marriagefamilylife.net. MFL22 partnership opportunities are available by sending an email to mfl@afa.net.

With his wife Meeke Addison, Wil co-hosts **Airing the Addisons** on American Family Radio, 2-3 p.m. CT, weekdays. Homeschooling parents of six, the Addisons cover a broad range of critical family, spiritual, and cultural issues.



Scriptures cited are from the NASB 1995.

Until Death Do Us Part

Founding mothers stood strong and faithful beside the Founding Fathers in pursuit of freedom.

BY JOY LUCIUS

Young Dorothy Quincy and her fiancé's Aunt Lydia watched the first battle of the Revolutionary War from the upstairs window of a home in Concord, Massachusetts.

When two injured men were brought into the home, Dorothy remarked fearlessly with a note of humor, "One, whose head had been grazed by a [musket] ball, insisted that he was dead, but the other, who was shot through the arm, behaved better."

"I have to say Dorothy Quincy Hancock was the matriarch who impacted me most," recalled author and scholar Dr. Stephen Flick. "Her future husband – John – was hated by the king and his supporters, and she was well aware of the dangers that entailed."

As the first signature on the colonies' Declaration of Independence John Hancock's big, bold signature forever marked his place in history. But exactly how history would portray this young man from Massachusetts – hero or villain – was still unknown. Fortunately, 250 years later, Hancock's name is synonymous with the American Revolution.

Family, danger, marriage, and death had created a tense and sober context in 1776 America. And Hancock and Quincy were in the thick of the conflict. But they made it to the altar and pledged their lives to each other.

Since 1549, countless couples have exchanged some form of these wedding



John and Abigail Adams

vows from the *Book of Common Prayer*: "...to have and to hold from this day forth, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death do us part."

Whether or not the Hancocks or other founding couples used those exact words, they most certainly lived by them. Indeed, the wives of the founders, learned through trials and tribulations just what it meant to honor their marriage vows.

Lasting legacy

For Dr. Stephen Flick, founder and executive director of Christian Heritage Fellowship (CHF), the legacy of these women became the driving force behind *American Matriarchs: Wives of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence*.

Flick told *The Stand* this book is part of a trilogy of works authored in 1912 by Mary and Harry Green. A brother and sister writing team, the Greens were descendants of Oliver Wolcott, one of the signers.

"Though I provide the intro for this publication," said Flick, "*American Matriarchs* comes from a collection of works called *The Pioneer Mothers of America*.

"Republishing this book was essential. It recounts how important these women were to our freedom, how they contributed to our independence, and how they were appreciated by our Founding Fathers."

Teaching tool

According to Flick, *American Matriarchs* also fulfills CHF's two-fold mission to reclaim America's Christian Heritage and celebrate the life-changing influence of the gospel around the world.

Flick explained, "This book is just one of many tools CHF uses to provide historical, rational, and biblical answers to the questions concerning the role of Christianity amid America's increasing moral decay."

"I do wish the faith of these women was more conspicuous in these stories. That faith aspect really needs to be shared, but at least the topic is introduced in *American Matriarchs*, making it a good starting point for learning."

The book contains 13 chapters, one for each of the original colonies. Each woman's story is arranged geographically north to south, from New Hampshire to Georgia, according to whichever

colony her husband represented in the Second Continental Congress.

Standard of strength

Just as some names of those original 56 signers are more recognizable than others, a few of the women are more familiar too. Abigail Adams is probably the most well-known, holding a unique place of national honor as the wife of President John Adams and the mother of President John Quincy Adams.

But it is Abigail Adams' strength and courage which fill her letters to her beloved husband while he was away attending to the business of the young nation.

In 1775, after personal sickness and the loss of her mother, Abigail could have easily tried to dissuade her husband's quest for freedom. Instead, she wrote unwaveringly to John on which course the colonies must follow: "Let us separate; they [the Tories] are unworthy to be our brethren."

It was later written that Abigail Adams always stood staunchly by her husband. But if it had come to a decision between death or dishonor, she would have urged him without hesitation to choose the former.

Example of endurance

Of all the women honored in *American Matriarchs*, the story of Elizabeth Annesley Lewis, wife of Francis Lewis, is the most sobering.

In 1775, as soon as the British took possession of Long Island, New York, troops were dispatched to capture Lewis' wife. She was carried into the city, without time to even gather a change of clothing or bedding.

With little food and no outside communication, Elizabeth Lewis was treated like a criminal. Three weeks later, a family servant lovingly brought her clothing and food and secretly carried out her letters to friends.

Hearing of her predicament, General George Washington promptly ordered the arrest of the wives of two Tory

dignitaries. An exchange was arranged, though Mrs. Lewis was still restricted to her home.

She was finally allowed to leave New York a few months later, but she never fully recovered from her imprisonment.

Years later, Julia Delafield described her grandmother Elizabeth as "Heaven's best gift" to her grandfather Francis. But she added, "The conduct and careers of her children is the best eulogy of Mrs. Francis Lewis."

Down payment on destiny

Likewise, other matriarchs were imprisoned or detained, but none to the degree of Mrs. Lewis. Even so, their sacrifices were equally consequential.


The stress of war and the lack of supplies contributed to sickness and untimely deaths. Family fortunes were

“**Republishing this book was essential. It recounts how important these women were to our freedom.**”

DR. STEPHEN FLICK

freely given (or confiscated by the British), homes were looted and destroyed, and family ties to England were forever severed in support of the cause.

"Truly," reflected Flick, "these women, their husbands, and their families willingly sacrificed all for America.

"We are their legacy, but our freedom was not free. America's matriarchs helped pay the price for our liberty." 

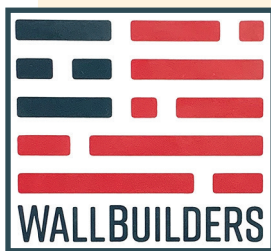
Christian Heritage Fellowship



CHRISTIAN
HERITAGE FELLOWSHIP

Both Dr. Stephen Flick and historian David Barton have republished books from The Pioneer Mothers of America series published in the early 1900s. Both include enlightening additional commentary.

For more information on Flick and the excellent resources of Christian Heritage Fellowship, go to christianheritagefellowship.com.



WallBuilders

In his foreword to *Wives of the Signers*, David Barton explains that modern Americans are the posterity for whom our forefathers were willing to sacrifice their "lives, fortunes, and sacred honor." Though much has been penned about these founders, little is known of the sacrifices willingly made by their wives.

In this volume, historical preservationists at WallBuilders rectify that error through *The Pioneer Mothers of America, Third Volume*, which reintroduces Americans to impactful women such as Hannah Jones Floyd and Annis Boudinot Stockton. Through these and other vignettes, readers see the strength, wisdom, and determination that each woman demonstrated in the face of danger and deprivation.

Hear **WallBuilders Live!** with David Barton on American Family Radio (afr.net) at 11:30-noon CT, Sundays and 2:30-3 a.m. CT, weekdays. Visit wallbuilders.com to discover a vast array of resources validating the Christian foundation of U.S. history.

Some gave all — honoring veterans on Memorial Day

Wreaths Across America offers an easy and meaningful way to honor the nation's fallen soldiers.

BY TEDDY JAMES

Editor's note: This commentary is condensed from a May 2015 feature by Teddy James, an AFA staff writer at the time. (See afajournal.org)

Memorial Day. To some, it is just a flag, resting in a triangular box on a mantle. To others, it explains why there's an odd number of place settings at the table, why the opposite side of the bed stays cold, why there's a vacant seat at graduation, why a bride walks down the aisle alone.

To some, it is just a day, an excuse for a three-day weekend to barbeque and celebrate the beginning of summer. To others, it is a day to remember daughters they can't hug, dads they can't call, friends they couldn't save, brothers who saved them with the ultimate sacrifice.

Why we remember

No fewer than two dozen cities claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day. While the site is disputed, it is clear the tradition started around 1866 as a way to memorialize soldiers who died during the Civil War.

The sentiment covered the country, and today, Memorial Day pays homage to those who surrendered their lives in all wars for a purpose they deemed bigger than their personal safety.

Who we remember

Army Sergeant First Class Paul R. Smith was part of B Company, 11th Engineer Battalion of the 3rd Infantry Division. On April 4, 2003, Smith partici-

pated in building an impromptu prisoner of war holding area in Baghdad, Iraq. During the construction, his unit was attacked by a group of Iraqi fighters.

Smith climbed into a damaged M113 to man its .50 caliber machine gun and ordered the driver to reposition the vehicle so he could fire on the enemy, leaving himself unprotected and exposed to enemy fire.

Afterward, Smith's team found him slumped over the machine gun. His armor showed 13 bullet holes. SFC Smith was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Smith and countless other heroes who have given their all for America are who Memorial Day honors.


How we remember

Morrill Worcester won a trip to Washington, D.C., and Arlington National Cemetery when he was 12. The image of rows and rows of headstones lodged itself in the mind of the preteen. The sight taught him real people gave their lives to

pay for the freedom he enjoyed every day. That lesson never left him.

Years later, Worcester founded his successful business, Worcester Wreaths, in Harrington, Maine. One year he had a surplus of Christmas wreaths, and the image of Arlington's unadorned headstones came back to mind. With the help of Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and others, Worcester placed the wreaths in an older section at Arlington.

Worcester and his team quietly kept the tradition until 2005 when an image of the gravestones, semi-covered in snow and decorated with evergreen wreaths and red bows, took the internet by storm.

From the sudden outpouring of support, Worcester and a team developed Wreaths Across America, and the movement continues to grow. The wreaths are a solemn, silent tribute to those who gave their lives for a nation's freedom. 

Wreaths of remembrance

On National Wreaths Across America Day – December 17 this year – the group coordinates wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington Cemetery and 2,500 more sites in all 50 states. Honor a fallen soldier this year.

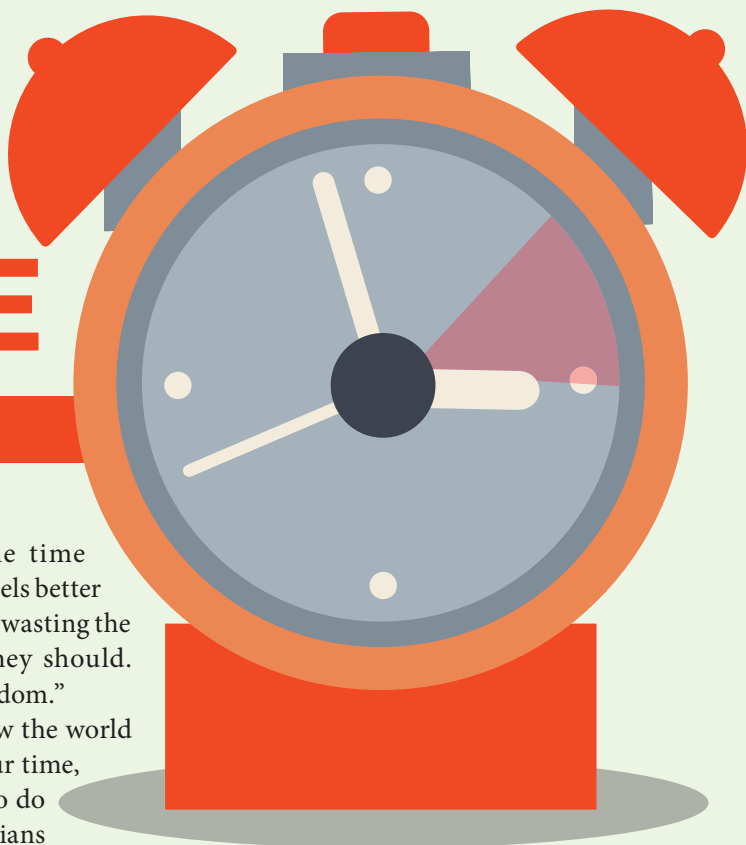
- Volunteer to lay wreaths at a local cemetery.
- Start a community fundraiser.
- Serve the family of a fallen soldier.
- Sponsor a wreath now. It will be placed December 17.

Learn more at wreathscrossamerica.org or 877-385-9504.



REDEEMING YOUR TIME

BY PARKER KATHLEEN MAY



“But if Time is really only a fourth dimension of Space ... cannot we move in Time as we move about in the other dimensions of Space?”

This quote comes from the classic story *The Time Machine* by H. G. Wells. In this scene, the main character challenges his colleagues to consider the reality and ramifications of time travel.

Sadly, time travel is not a practical concept, but the fact that there are so many stories about it shows that humans are obsessed with time.

People who are always busy will complain that there is not enough time in the day, while others who do nothing all day gripe about how time moves too slowly – and that is probably where the appeal of time travel comes from. Even so, everyone can agree that time is valuable and should be used in the most efficient way possible.

TIME ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

One thing that our culture focuses on today is self. “Do what you want to make yourself happy,” the world tells us. To do that, take the time to do whatever will make you feel good. It could be something as harmless as playing sports or being with friends, or it could be something damaging like substance abuse. It does not even need to be something

active to take the time away. If someone feels better doing nothing and wasting the day away, then they should. That’s today’s “wisdom.”

Contrary to how the world tells us to spend our time, the Bible tells us to do the opposite. Ephesians

5:16 instructs Christians to live

“redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Christians know from the Bible that our days are numbered and that there is an end coming. The Bible tells us to use our time wisely because we do

55:8 makes it known that our ways are not the Lord’s. Not having our focus centered on God will be harmful in the end, no matter how good it might feel in the moment.

OUR PRIORITY IN LIFE SHOULD BE USING OUR TIME TO HONOR AND GLORIFY HIM WHO GAVE US TIME IN THE FIRST PLACE.

Even though Christians are told certain ways on how they should use their time does not mean that they cannot do regular everyday

not know what will happen in the future.

The book of Colossians tells people exactly how they should live to use their time wisely. Verse 1:10 states, “Walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

STEWARDSHIP OF OUR TIME

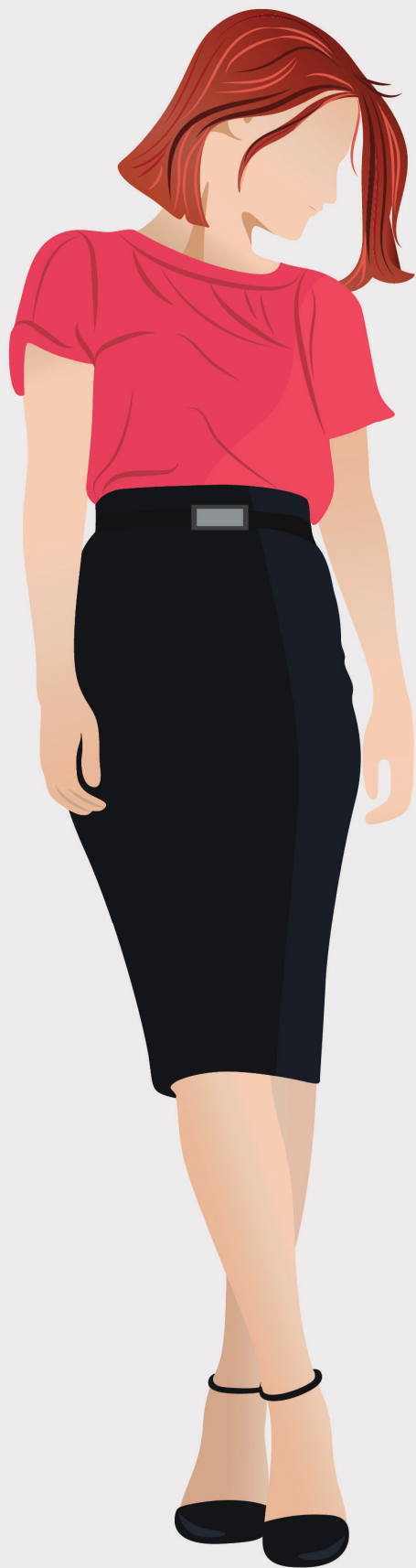
As Christians, the Bible is pretty clear on how we should use our time. Our priority in life should be using our time to honor and glorify Him who gave us time in the first place. If man were to do exactly what he wanted, it would be defined by unrighteousness. Isaiah

things. Going to the movies, hanging with friends, or taking some time off is not wrong. These things can be enjoyed in thankfulness and to the glory of God. The danger comes when these earthly pleasures become idols.

Time is important, and unfortunately, we cannot go back in time like they do in the movies to reclaim moments we’ve lost. Using our time wisely is a crucial factor in life because once it is gone, we cannot get it back. The things of this world will not matter, but the time we used wisely to honor the Lord will have eternal value. ^E

The PURITY CULTURE Debate

BY KENDRA WHITE



Have you ever heard the term, “purity culture?” I started hearing this term around 2019 when Joshua Harris, author of *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, renounced his Christian faith and discontinued his book, apologizing for all the harm he had supposedly caused. Since then, many others have adopted the term, and many bloggers and YouTubers are now bashing a movement they claim was emotionally scarring and spiritually harmful.

I grew up reading Joshua Harris and being taught a clear sexual ethic by my Bible-believing parents and many leaders in my church. So I was initially confused by all the controversy. What exactly was purity culture and why was it considered so harmful? If it was hurting people, I wanted to understand.

Let’s start with a definition. Purity culture (as defined by its opponents, who seem to be the primary ones using the term) is an evangelical movement that started in the 1990s and emphasized purity through events such as conferences and purity galas. Often purity pledges were involved, and many women chose to start wearing purity rings around this time.

A CRITIQUE OF PURITY CULTURE

In a recent episode of the popular podcast **Ear Biscuits** titled “Our Teenage Years: Growing Up in Purity Culture,” hosts Rhett McLaughlin and Link Neal go into great detail discussing their critique of this movement. To summarize their critique, they claim 1) that purity culture was gimmicky and felt like a giant marketing scheme, 2) that it focused too much on fear and shame,

causing those who had made “mistakes” to feel like broken, damaged goods, and 3) that it focused only on a woman’s purity or virginity as being sacred, and it introduced a double standard.

IS PURITY CULTURE TOO GIMMICKY?

I grew up in a culture where sexual purity was valued and talked about. One of the older girls at church led a Bible study in her home and invited me to come. It was all about purity and was designed for young ladies in their pre-teens/early teens. I think we even went through a study by Joshua Harris.

We had some very important conversations that shaped my worldview and gave me an excellent biblical foundation to build on. We talked about things like “guarding your heart” and how to dress modestly. I saw godly examples of older teens at my church who didn’t define their value by whether or not they had a boyfriend. They wanted to honor God with their whole heart and their pursuit of holy living was motivated by a genuine love for the God they served. There was nothing gimmicky about it.

Later, when my dad showed me a magazine with purity rings and asked me if I wanted one, I was thrilled! When I put that purity ring on, I knew there was nothing magical about it. It alone held no power to keep me from temptation. But the conversations surrounding getting the ring and the commitment I made when I put it on, solidified in my heart a firm resolve to honor God with my body because it was not my own – I was a temple of the Holy Spirit who lived within me. The accusation that purity culture just slaps a ring on peoples’ fingers and expects them to live chaste

lives is, I believe, an unfair one.

Events such as purity conferences were never meant to replace parents' crucial role in the spiritual nurturing of their teens, but rather to bolster it. Such conferences were meant to open the door to important conversations that needed to happen. They were a response to the sexual revolution and many heartbroken adults who wanted to pass on the message "Don't do what I did. There's a better way."

Perhaps I'm naïve, but I don't think this movement was truly about making money off of purity rings and "true love waits" T-shirts. I think a group of God-fearing people saw a need in culture and wanted to do something about it rather than sit back and watch their children fall into the seductive traps the enemy had laid before them. Was this the most effective way to teach purity? That remains to be seen. But I believe most people's intentions were in the right spot.

IS PURITY CULTURE A CULTURE OF SHAME?

The whole premise of the Christian faith is built on the idea that we are not and never can be "good enough" or "pure enough" to gain salvation. Without forgiveness, our petty attempts at self-righteousness all appear as filthy rags in God's sight.

Perhaps there are a few churches where this message has not been clearly articulated. But not in mine. Every conversation I remember hearing surrounding purity was always framed by the gospel and followed up with the message that forgiveness is always waiting for those who truly repent. Analogies such as the flower petal one (while certainly not perfect) were intended to show that there was something precious at stake that could be lost. And virginity until marriage is indeed a precious gift, one that is becoming increasingly rare. According to one study shared by CBN news, only 3% of individuals in America are virgins before their wedding.

As for feelings of shame and guilt, I think it's important to recognize that shame is not always a bad thing. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve noticed that they were naked and they were ashamed of their sin. This was a proper response! They had intentionally violated a command made by the God of the universe. These feelings can be excellent tools to pinpoint sin in our lives and to drive us to repentance. The true problem comes when we sin and no longer feel any shame but have hardened our hearts to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

In the podcast cited above, Link talks about his struggle with pornography and how "it was torture" to feel like there was a wall between him and God. I'd like to suggest that this "torture" he felt was the work of the Holy Spirit drawing him back toward the right relationship with God. Conviction can feel like torture for sure. But in my experience, I don't think the leaders of purity culture were the ones inflicting this pain. I think it was the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of students who came under conviction when hearing the truth of God's word proclaimed.

DOES PURITY CULTURE TEACH A DOUBLE STANDARD?

When it comes to this critique, perhaps Rhett and Link may have a point. Now I was never in the boy's group when we were split up into guys and girls, so I guess I never heard their "speech," but I do seem to remember there being an emphasis on guys "protecting a woman's purity." This could appear to make it seem like a woman's virginity is the only one that matters. But in the eyes of God, sexual purity is equally important in both men and women.

When answering the world's criticism of purity culture, Christians should be very clear: Sexual purity is a command of God, but God's grace always abounds. **E**





Social Media & Depression

BY JORDAN CHAMBLEE

Young people struggle with depression and anxiety that can very often be linked to their use of social media. This is nothing new. Social media has been around for more than a decade, and that is plenty of time to see the impact on regular users. According to a study from 2017, depression symptoms and suicide rates are climbing among adolescents – a growth that is linked to screen time and social media use.

What is it about social media that causes this, and what can we do to prevent it?

SOCIAL MEDIA IS A CONSTANT BARRAGE OF BAD NEWS.

News outlets online know that bad news grabs attention and – more importantly – earns a click. Clicks mean revenue, so news outlets have more than enough incentive to pump out as much bad news as they can.

This inevitably leads to a skewed view of reality for those whose main contact with the world at large is through social media. The world becomes darker with every headline, and hope seems to fade away as the reader chases the next wave of outrage. These feelings can bring a sense of purpose as if the news is giving the reader something to fight against or stand up for. But it does so at the dear cost of a handle on reality. For young minds, this can be too much to handle.

... A WORLD THAT CAN
SURROUND YOU WITH
THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE
AND YET LEAVE YOU
COMPLETELY ALONE.

SOCIAL MEDIA BREEDS DISCONTENT AND ISOLATION.

Users of social media are constantly bombarded with advertisements, but they aren't all commercials trying to sell soap or soup. *Influencers* (people who earn a living on social media platforms) advertise their lifestyles, often highly edited, and their followers are put into a position of admiration and envy. Young people see their favorite influencers wearing designer clothing, driving expensive cars, or becoming famous, and young minds begin to view their own lives as uninteresting, or worse, not worth living.

The glamorous lifestyles of influencers, the constant stream of entertainment, an escape from reality – these are the promises of social media, and the medium can become an inescapable black hole for everyone, particularly young people. It is a world that can surround you with thousands of people, yet leave you completely alone.

Alexandra Hamlet, Psy. D, a clinical psychologist, says “The less you are connected with human beings in a deep, empathic way, the less you're really getting the benefits of a social interaction. The more superficial it is, the less likely it's going to cause you to feel connected, which is something we all need.”

God did not design humans minds to be satisfied with online *faux* communities. According to the previously mentioned 2017 study, it was found that social media active girls who also spent a significant amount of time offline in face-to-face interactions were less likely to develop signs of depression.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREVENT SOCIAL MEDIA DEPRESSION?

The simplest, yet often hardest, answer is to detox. Unplug from social media. This is difficult for people who have developed an addiction to social media, but it is worth the effort. Another way to maintain mental health is to curate your social media. Follow accounts, influencers, brands, etc. that are helpful to you. Search for spiritually uplifting content, influencers who are honest, and accounts that actively challenge you to walk closely with the Lord. In this way, you can transform social media from a stream of depression to an avenue of benefits. **E**

REVIEWS

Family entertainment • Documentaries • Resources for families • Books

Prayer and the End of Days

Today's troubled times lead Christians to think more seriously about the Bible's promises of the return of Christ to earth. Prayer advocate David Butts, founder of Harvest Prayer Ministries, has produced a practical handbook that will inform, guide, and encourage believers to engage in more effective and more focused prayer.

Prayer and the End of Days: Praying God's Purposes in Troubled Times will move readers from fear and anxiety and questions to trust and faith and more confidence.

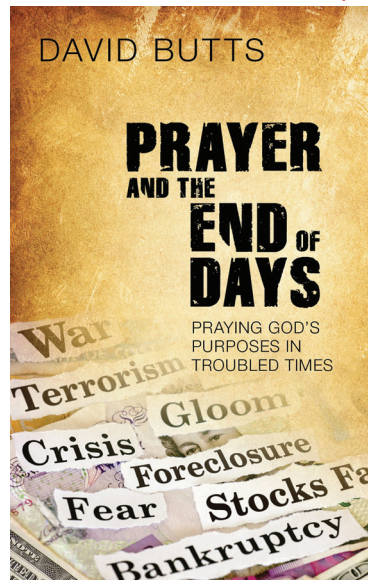
Chapter titles include:

- Prayer and End-Times Warfare.
- Prayer and the End-Times Revival.
- Praying the Will of God.
- Praying with Urgency.

It is a challenge for Christ followers to navigate a culture radically bent on expunging all things Christian from society, thus moving the nation closer and closer toward plunging into a moral abyss.

This small volume will equip and encourage readers for these days. See p. 18 for a review of David Butts' *Desperate for Change*.

PrayerShop Publishing, 107 pages, prayershop.org



Randall Murphree

Tiny Theologian series



Kids are constantly asking questions about God and His power. Have you ever wondered how to teach children about God's omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence? In Amy Gannett's *Tiny Theologians* series, she answers these deep theology questions in a way that young children (ages 1-4) can understand. Each

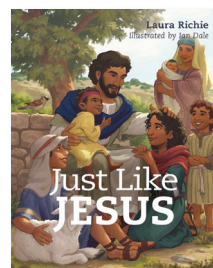
board book is filled with bright colors, rhymes, and answers about God's mightiness. The series includes: *Does God Go on Vacation?*, *Did God Learn His ABCs?*, and *Does God Sleep?*.

B&H Kids, 20 pages
christianbook.com

Hannah Meador

Just Like Jesus

Just Like Jesus by Laura Richie is a fun, interactive book for preschool children. Each page tells a different Bible story alongside a short activity. Richie uses these stories



and activities to show preschoolers (ages 0-3) how to utilize their surroundings to find ways to be like Jesus. This sweet board book would be a wonderful addition to any home or classroom.

David C. Cook, 14 pages
christianbook.com

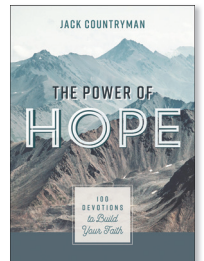
Carly McGee

The Power of Hope

The Power of Hope by Jack Countryman is a timely book of 100 devotions designed to build readers' faith. After 30 years in Christian publishing, Countryman realizes that people, now more than ever, are searching for a sure source of hope.

In *The Power of Hope*, readers will find a daily verse and a short account of a biblical character who also encountered troublesome times of uncertainty. Day by day, readers will shift their focus from their situation to their Savior.

Thomas Nelson, 203 pages
christianbook.com



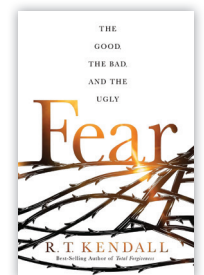
Joy Lucius

Fear: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

In his latest book, *Fear: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, Pastor R. T. Kendall explains how to scripturally discern the differences between fear of God (the good), fear of man (the bad), and fear of the enemy (the ugly).

In detail, Kendall expounds on how holy fear of God will help believers to disarm and overcome every other fear and live boldly for the cause of Christ.

Charisma House, 193 pages
christianbook.com



Joy Lucius

Useful to God

Who is D.L. Moody? Dr. James Spencer, president of D.L. Moody Center, knows that Moody was a very influential man in the evangelical sphere. In *Useful to God*, Spencer looks back at Moody's life and expands on nine different characteristics that believers can cultivate in their own lives.

The book contains devotions, questions, and inspiring quotes

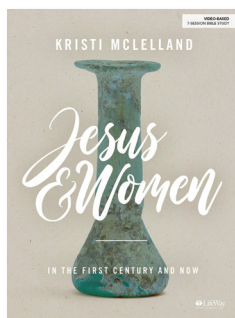
by Moody. *Useful to God* can be used in a small group setting or for individuals seeking to strengthen their relationship with the Lord.

James Spencer, 164 pages
kingdomwinds.com

Hannah Meador

Jesus and Women

"Sit back. Breathe deep. Enjoy the feast!" These simple phrases embody the message of Kristi McLelland's book, *Jesus and Women*. The



seven-week Bible study takes women through the Gospels from a Middle Eastern perspective, which puts the focus on Jesus and His actions instead of on the people with whom He interacted.

The theme emphasizes Jesus' pointed ministry to women and how He deliberately chose to elevate them. McLelland also encourages readers to view their time in God's Word as a feast, eating His Word as a source of strength. The end result will be a closer relationship with the God who so clearly loves women.

Lifeway, 160 pages
lifeway.com

Addie Grace Putnam

Escape with a bit of fiction

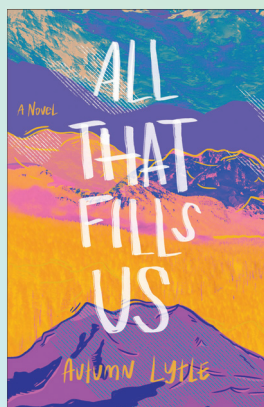
Ever Constant

Whitney Powell has seen a lot of tragedy and hardship in her life. Always feeling like she must be the strong one among her sisters, almost to her own detriment, Powell seems to be on the brink of losing control. In Tracie Peterson's new novel, *Ever Constant*, Peterson tells of an early 1900 sickness that is running rampant in the outlying villages of Alaska.

On a mission to help those impacted, Powell, her team of dogs, and Dr. Peter Cameron head out to help those in need. And the more time they spend together, the more Dr. Cameron begins to see her as more than his friend, while at the same time, another man with more sinister intentions tries to win her affection.

Bethany House Publishers, 340 pages, christianbook.com

Carly McGee



All That Fills Us

Melanie (Mel) Ellis struggles with anorexia and exercise addiction. After being repeatedly hospitalized, she realizes her need for treatment. While taking a by-foot, cross-country pilgrimage, she searches for healing and self-worth.

In this young adult novel, *All That Fills Us*, Ellis battles the natural environmental elements and her demons in an attempt to find herself. Having faced anorexia herself, author Autumn Lytle gives readers a glimpse of the grueling realities of living

with this disease while encouraging them to find their hope and worth in God alone.

Revell Books, 352 pages, christianbook.com

Carly McGee

Tacos for Two

Tacos for Two by Betsy St. Amant starts as a light-hearted tale of a culinary contest and two of its entrants, each desperate to win but competing for very different reasons. A horrible cook, Rory Perez is determined to win the food truck festival to keep her family's business afloat. Conversely, Jude Strong hopes winning will help him break free from his father's law firm and allow him to follow his calling into the culinary world. But as the battle of the chefs ensues, Rory and Jude find they have a lot more in common than tacos, while readers discover a story of sacrificial love woven within the humorous plot twists of *Tacos for Two*.

Revell Books, 384 pages, christianbook.com

Joy Lucius



5 Questions on 5 Prayers God Loves to Answer

Author Larry Selig uses the Lord's Prayer as a pattern to help others enhance their prayer life.

BY RANDALL MURPHREE

In *5 Prayers God Loves to Answer*, author Larry Selig has written a masterful guidebook based on themes found in the Lord's Prayer:

- Discover Jesus' promise to His followers.
- Experience prayer as an intimate talk with God.
- Understand the variety of ways God speaks to us.
- Discern whether it is God speaking.
- Extend God's kingdom through prayer.

Released in late 2020, it is already being used in Bangladesh, East Africa, Brazil, Nepal, Thailand, and Cambodia. Selig answered *The Stand's* five questions regarding this valuable resource.

1. *What inspired you to write 5 Prayers and why now?*

During my years as pastor, one of the questions which often troubled others was "Why didn't God answer my prayers?" ... I realized I needed a new focus: What are the kinds of requests He loves to answer?

I needed to be willing to lay aside my own agenda, and seek His desires. It meant reporting for duty each day and asking what He had planned for me to do to assist Him that day, and then the tough part, to actually do it!

The book is filled with many stories of that adventure, which created a wonder and awe about His great love. And out of this came a growing intimacy with the One who loves us with amazing grace.

2. *How long had it been in the making?*

The entire concept of prayer as conversation with God, speaking of course but learning to listen, had been marinating for some time.

About five years ago, I asked the Lord what His next assignment was. He seemed to say I was to write a book about all I had been learning about prayer as personal conversation with Him, and make it:

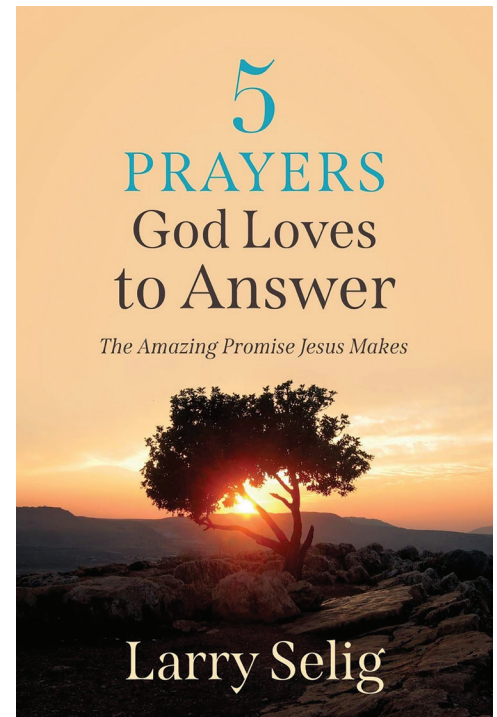
- personal, reflecting on things I had been learning.
- interesting, relating to the world where people live.
- practical, with exercises for individuals and groups.

Then came COVID-19, when all travel and speaking engagements were cancelled, and I had time to write!

3. *What makes this book unique among others?*

The book's focus is on the prayer Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4, which we call the Lord's Prayer. Because this prayer has become so familiar, we often fail to reflect on what it really means while we are praying, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" without sensing any personal responsibility.

It takes on a whole new meaning when we add, "Father, how can I assist You in restoring Your kingdom on earth to look more like Your heavenly kingdom?" The key step is asking with a willingness to listen to His response and then to obey His guidance.




4. *How is it gathering such traction around the world?*

The book gives an experiential rather than theological focus to an age-old question "Does God really exist and want a personal relationship with us?" And the stories and practical applications seem to connect with the needs of all generations.

5. *Can you share an example?*

One of my first international readers was a young doctor I met in the early 1990s when he was a teenager and I was doing discipleship training in Brazil. He has since graduated from medical school and serves on the staff of a large evangelical hospital near Brasilia.

He was so motivated by the book that he gathered a group of his young medical staff friends and others for a small group study. He has an ongoing vision to lead more groups in this book study. 

Published by Redemption Press, *5 Prayers* (158 pages) is available at online booksellers.

THE STAND

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