



Refresh!  
Planning your church retreat?  
Let us help!  
SEE PAGES 6-7



## Tebow one step closer to MLB?

### NY Mets invite Tebow to spring training

Christian athlete Tim Tebow will reportedly continue his baseball career. Tebow was invited to go with the New York Mets to spring training.

Last year Tebow played for Mets' minor league affiliates the Columbia Fireflies and then the St. Lucie Mets. After leaving the NFL, he has kept busy as a sports broadcaster and also being involved in humanitarian work. He also recently spoke at the Passion Conference. Tebow hopes to find a career in Major League Baseball, and perhaps this year may be his best chance.

Last season Tebow had a .226 batting average, including eight home runs and 52 RBIs.

Although Tebow has perhaps exceeded expectations as far as his baseball ability, his ability alone is not the only reason Mets General Manager Sandy Alderson decided to sign him:

"We signed him because he is a good

■ See **TEBOW** page 3



Dwight and Anita Widaman  
Photo: Connor Cades

NEW BEGINNINGS

## The Widamans reflect on 29 years of publishing and are ready for the future

By Alan Goforth

In the early 1990s, Dwight Widaman had never run a business, sold an ad or even owned a computer. He had something far more important, however – a God-sized dream.

"I was in church one Sunday in April of 1991 and saw a headline that Kansas City Christian newspaper was for sale," he said. "Something just leapt in my heart. It com-

Check out front pages from Metro Voice over the last three decades. PAGE 9

binated my passions for current events, having something of my own and working for myself. I talked to my pastor and a church elder who was a banker. We prayed about it

for several weeks. We agreed that I should buy it."

Steve Hewitt, publisher of Christian Computing magazine, had started Kansas City Christian in 1990 after seeing a similar newspaper in the Twin

■ See **METRO VOICE** page 8

## K-12 and College Expo to be held February 24

Metro Voice will hold our **20th Annual Christian Education and College Expo** this month. The free event is Saturday, Feb. 24 at Colonial Presbyterian Church from 10 to 2pm. See ad on back page.

The event brings together many families from across the metro and beyond. Featured are K-12 Christian schools and homeschooling resources PLUS 40 Christian colleges from 17 states.

In addition to representatives from each of these schools, we have several free mini-seminars:

■ 10:30 a.m. Finding the Most Financial Aid and Understanding FAFSA

■ 11:30 a.m. K-12 Education Parent Panel

■ 12:30 p.m. Homeschooling 101: How to Begin

For info, visit our website: metrovoicenews.com



## SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY EMAIL

As print edition ends, there's still a way you can stay informed!

Though this issue marks our last print edition, Metro Voice will still be informing the Christian community.

Beginning March 1 we will send out a weekly email filled with late-breaking local and national news, concert info, reviews, health, finances and more! It's convenient, easy and FREE!

To join the effort just visit our website at [www.metrovoicenews.com](http://www.metrovoicenews.com)

## Missouri statewide survey asks sixth graders if they want to change gender

Parents in the small south-central Missouri school district of Crawford R-1 are upset that a state-mandated questionnaire of students asks if they had thought about changing their gender.

"The most inappropriate [question] was if they were transgender or thought about changing genders. My daughter, I mean she just doesn't understand that," Samantha Overkramer, parent of a 6th grader, told News 4 in St. Louis.

Asking the questions was the Missouri Department of Mental Health. The bi-annual student survey is known as the "Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Survey." The survey asks 6th to 12th graders questions about substance abuse, bullying, suicidal behavior and this year's trendiest issue, gender identity.

The results are allegedly used by the Department of Mental Health "to understand risk behavior by teens and helps to tailor prevention programs."

One suspects the questions plant as many seeds as they potentially solve problems.

The principal of the local high school said that students were given the choice of answering or not answering questions, but parents believed that the kids were pressured into participating whether the questions made them uncomfortable or not.

In the letter to parents, Principal Brian Witt wrote, "School districts are not provided with survey questions prior to giving the survey to students." The Department of Mental Health claimed that school districts did not have to participate and, if they did, they could choose not to include certain sections of the test.

The parent protest paid off. The gender question has been removed, at least in the Crawford School District.

The parents warn that other districts should be aware their children are also being asked the same questions.

## Adoption, foster care could be more common in churches

The Bible has a lot to say about caring for orphans. Protestant churches in the United States may need to listen a little more.

Almost half of Protestant churchgoers say their congregation has not been involved with any adoption or foster care in the past year, according to a study released by LifeWay Research.

### Domestic adoptions becoming commonplace

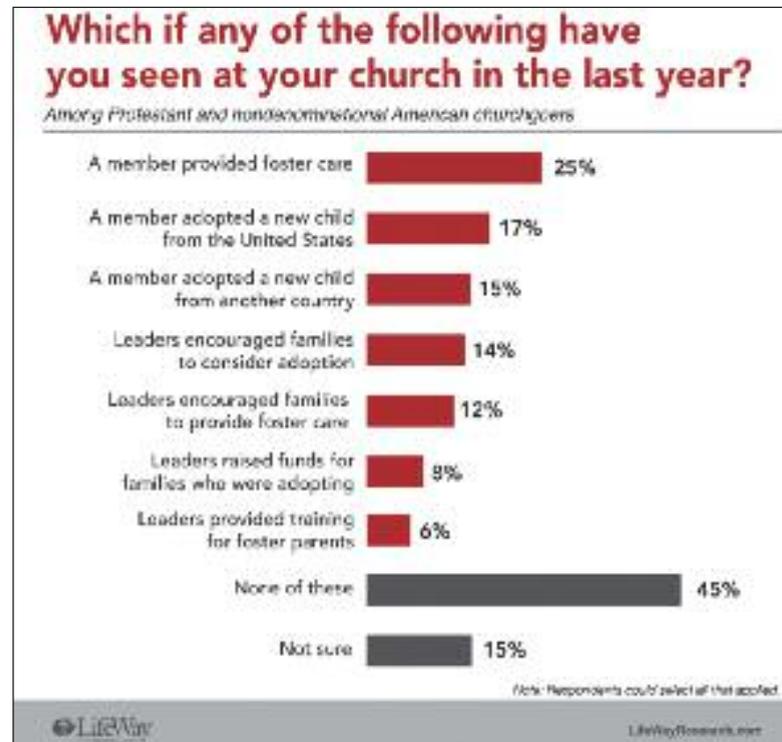
Since the early 2000s, many Protestant churches have commemorated "Orphan Sunday" every November to draw attention to the plight of orphans around the world.

In the past, they've often focused on international adoption and orphanages. But in recent years, foster care -- both in the United States and abroad -- has become a focus as well.

LifeWay Research's survey of 1,010 churchgoers -- those who attend a Protestant or nondenominational church at least once a month -- found 25 percent say someone from their church has been involved in foster care over the past year with non-denominational churches taking the lead.

Seventeen percent say someone from their church has adopted a child from the U.S. in the past year. Fifteen percent say someone from their church has adopted a child from another country.

Churchgoers from nondenominational churches are also most likely to know someone at church who had adopted a child from the United States (25 percent). Baptists (15 percent),



Lutherans (12 percent) and Pentecostals (10 percent) are less likely.

### Church leaders

Sadly, church leaders in general don't talk much about adoption, according to LifeWay Research's survey.

■ Fourteen percent of churchgoers say church leaders have encouraged families to consider adoption.

■ Twelve percent say church leaders encouraged them to become involved in foster care.

Its even worse news when it comes to

church leaders offering practical assistance.

■ Only eight percent say church leaders raised funds for families that are adopting.

■ And just six percent say church leaders provided training for foster parents.

Overall, about half (45 percent) of churchgoers say their church has had no involvement with or conversation about foster care and adoption. Leaders at smaller congregations are less likely to encourage families to consider adoption (8 percent) or foster care (8 percent), to raise funds for adoptive families (5 percent) or to provide training for foster parents (2 percent).

Leaders at larger congregations are more likely to encourage families to consider adoption (23 percent) or foster care (20 percent) and to raise funds for adoptive families (15 percent) or provide training for foster parents (13 percent) than smaller congregations.

Adoption and foster care are most commonly mentioned among nondenominational churchgoers. Twenty-nine percent say their church's leaders encourage families to adopt. Twenty-six percent say their church's leaders encouraged families to provide foster care. Fourteen percent say church leaders raised money for adoptive families. Twelve percent provided training for foster parents.

The number of adoptions in the U.S. has declined slightly in recent years, according to National Council on Adoption, from 133,737 in 2007 to 110,373 in 2014 while the need for adoption continues to skyrocket.

According to a 2015 report from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, 427,910 children were in foster care, with 111,820 waiting for adoption.

"There may be no greater expression of the Christian faith than extending hope and love to children whose birth families are not able to care for them," says Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research.

More churches need to get the memo.



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# PROTECTING CHILDREN IS GOAL OF NEW LEGISLATION

## Legislator wants minimum age to marry in Missouri

By **Alisha Shur**

About a year and a half ago, St. Louis TV station KMOV aired an investigative report about teen marriages in Missouri.

Lauren Trager's report details a 15-year-old girl's story of being brought to Kansas from Idaho by her father to marry her rapist and a 50-year-old man from Arizona marrying a 15-year-old girl he had been abusing. And it all was legal in Missouri.

It just so happened that now-Rep. Jean Evans saw the report and it piqued her interest and her anger. She started looking into the marriage laws in Missouri and saw an issue: the state had no minimum age for marriage.

Entering into the 2017 regular session as a freshman lawmaker, Evans tried to fix that.

"This was the very first bill I filed," Evans said. The bill was approved by the Missouri House of Representatives and passed two Senate committees but never made it to the Senate floor.



Now it is back again. So far, the legislation has passed the Children and Families committee unanimously and was referred to the Rules-Legislative Oversight committee.

"What this bill does is basically make it illegal to get married if you are under the age of 15 or if someone is over the age of 21 and the person they want to marry is under the age of 18, that would also be illegal," Evans said. The bill would also require minors over the age of 15 to obtain parental and judicial approval.

"We are protecting children from

those who would do them harm," Evans said. After Evans originally filed the bill, she would get calls with "horror stories."

According to a Frontline investigation, more than 207,000 minors in America were married between 2000 and 2015. In the KMOV report that aired in July 2016, it was stated that 800 16- and 17-year-olds, and 100 15-year-olds had wed since 2012 in Missouri. However, tracking down accurate figures is difficult because marriage licenses are not tracked by ages.

"We have to recognize there are predators out there," Evans said. "You can't be a predator and marry a young girl."

Eighteen is the recognized age of adulthood in American, which means that in an abusive marital situation, a minor can't go to a shelter for protection. Those married as minors are three times more likely to be abused than those who marry as adults, according to The Economist, which leaves them with limited options.

Other statistics for child marriages are not favorable. The Economist cites 70 to

**"When we find out people are bringing children here to marry their abuser, we as legislators have to look at why. And then we have to fix it."**

—Jean Evans

80 percent of child marriages end in divorce and those that marry as children are twice as likely to live in poverty and are more likely to drop out of high school. They are also a higher risk of diabetes, cancer, stroke and are more likely to suffer from mental-health problems.

"We have to speak for those who can't speak for themselves," Evans said.

She is a pro-life advocate who firmly believes in protecting the most vulnerable and that being pro-life doesn't end.

"When we find out people are bringing children here to marry their abuser, we as legislators have to look at why," Evans said. "And then we have to fix it."

While the setting a minimum age for marriage has garnered bipartisan support there has been some objections raised.

### newsbriefs

#### Former New Jersey pastor sentenced for choking Kansas baby

A former New Jersey pastor has been sentenced for an unprovoked attack on a stranger's baby inside a Kansas Walmart.

The 55-year-old Oleh Zhownirovych has been

sentenced to 11 months in prison and six months in the Johnson County Jail, to be served consecutively.



Zhownirovych pleaded no contest in December to felony aggravated battery and misdemeanor battery.

In October 2016, Zhownirovych walked up to a woman waiting in a checkout lane at a Walmart in Overland Park and began choking her 4-month-old daughter. The woman screamed and several people came to her aid and got the baby away from him. The child was not seriously injured.

Zhownirovych is the former pastor of a Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Clifton, New Jersey, though the church may not have been an official part of the denomination.

### TEBOW

continued from page 1

guy, partly because of his celebrity, partly because this is an entertainment business,"

Alderson said. "My attitude is 'why not?'"

Fireflies President John Katz said Tebow has been a great addition to the team:

"His contributions, both on

the field and in our community, have made a tremendous impact on our team, the City of Columbia and the entire South Atlantic League," Katz said. "We wish Tim the best as

he continues his journey to Citi Field."

Asked whether he believes he will make it to the major leagues, Tebow simply replied:

"It's not something that I

have to answer. I just try to go out there and try to work. A lot more smarter, wiser people than me that make those decisions."

# National Right To Life Convention

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## Politicians set partisanship aside to combat human trafficking

Hundreds of Missourians rallied at the state Capitol in Jefferson City in January against human trafficking.

State Sen. Jamilah Nasheed, D-St. Louis, helped organize the rally, as part of her sex trafficking awareness day.

Nasheed, the Senate minority caucus whip, says Missouri is a “hotspot” for human trafficking.

“We’re going to shine the light on exploitation, we’re going to shine the light on those individual predators who think that they can get away with it,” Nasheed told the audience. “We’re going to tell them again: not on our watch.”

Nasheed told the audience that human trafficking is a “serious, silent epidemic” in Missouri.

She’s filed legislation that would allow those forced into prostitution will to have their criminal records relating to prostitution expunged, upon court approval.

The Missouri Senate Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee recently held a hearing on Nasheed’s bill.

Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley also spoke at the rally.

Hawley, a Republican, says action is what’s needed to fight human trafficking in Missouri. He tells the audience



Senator Nasheed was joined by politicians from both sides of the aisle at the rally

that human trafficking is an epidemic both nationally and in Missouri.

“In 2017, last year, the National Trafficking Hotline reported 240 reports of human trafficking here in the state of Missouri,” Hawley said.

Hawley says that over the past decade, the national hotline reports more than 1,000 potential human trafficking victims in Missouri.

He also noted that July raids across southwest Missouri shut down 13 businesses that were acting as fronts for human trafficking.

The human trafficking issue has also attracted attention with movement to pass the “Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act.” That bill is aimed at making sure websites like Backpage can be held liable.

Backpage was also blasted at the rally by Hawley, who describes it as “a website that facilitates trafficking against women.”

The National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline is (888) 373-7888.

## Organization compares first year of Reagan vs. Trump

Some of his most ardent admirers compare President Donald Trump to Ronald Reagan.

Others compare him to Richard Nixon. But where do the two presidents compare in action? The New York Times is reporting that the conservative Heritage Foundation now ranks President Trump as doing even better than the conservative icon Reagan in the first year of his presidency.

The Times reports: The Trump administration has pursued policies that have hewed remarkably close to the recommendations of a leading conservative think tank, the Heritage Foundation, which found in a new review that nearly two-thirds of its ideas had been carried out or embraced by the White House over the past year.

Not one to dwell on the details of governing, President Trump has shown a considerable degree of deference to groups within the conservative movement like Heritage, leading to a rightward shift in social, environmental, immigration and foreign policy.

The results, Heritage found in its review, exceeded even the first year of Ronald Reagan’s presidency, whose tenure has long been the conservative gold standard.

The Times continued that as the Obama years came to an end Heritage began developing in 2016 a list of 334 policy prescriptions that a new Repub-



lican administration could adopt. It included a variety of actions, like reimposing work requirements for welfare recipients, ending the program that shields young immigrants brought here illegally as children, withdrawing from the Paris climate accord and eliminating certain gender identity protections.

Heritage said that 64 percent of those items were enacted by the administration either through executive order or another means of enforcement, or included in Mr. Trump’s budget, which has not been voted on by Congress.

In Reagan’s first year, only 49 percent of Heritage’s wish list items were embraced by the president or enacted. At the time, Heritage identified a familiar problem for why the administration’s policies were wanting. In almost every federal agency, Heritage said in November 1981, “delayed appointments, unqualified or misqualified appointments, or the appointment of individuals who are not committed to the President’s goals and policies” had delayed or thwarted policy changes.”

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# Overlap on persecution lists reveals danger for Christians

Last month after the U.S. State Department redesignated 10 nations as countries of particular concern (CPCs) over “systemic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations,” the Christian group Open Doors USA released its annual World Watch List of the 50 most dangerous countries for Christians.

Both lists include Myanmar (also known as Burma), China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, with Open Doors noting all 10 countries had extreme, very high, or high levels of persecution against Christians.

Totalitarian North Korea created the most danger, followed closely by Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan and Pakistan, according to Open Doors’ analysis. India jumped from 15 to 11 on the list due to Hindu nationalists’ increased persecution and the growing power of the nationalist political party.

Overall, 215 million Christians around the world face threats due to their faith. Open Doors called Islamic extremism the “dominant” driver of persecution against Christians in 35 of the 50 countries listed. That in-



**Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani greets his wife Fatemah after his release from prison in Iran. Photo courtesy of World Watch Monitor.**

cluded attacks by Islamic extremist groups like the Taliban in Afghanistan, al-Shabaab in Somalia, and Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Open Doors CEO David Curry said his team found a “shocking” escalation in attacks against Christian women. Researchers documented 2,260 separate cases of sexual harassment, rape, or forced marriage of Christian women in 2017—six women

per day. Because of underreporting, Open Doors suspects many more cases likely happened.

Pakistan did not make the State Department’s list, but it was the fifth most dangerous country for Christians according to Open Doors, with the most recorded violence.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an advisory body to the State Department, also monitors religious freedom in dozens of countries and publishes findings and recommendations each April.

All but two countries USCIRF named in 2017 also ranked on the 2018 World Watch List: Russia and Cuba. Curry said Open Doors will watch Russia closely due to the potential negative effects of recent religious laws banning evangelism, among other things.

“As yet, it does not rise to the level of the other countries on the list,” he said. “Likewise, Cuba is a country to watch, but currently is not on the list.”

—by Julia A. Seymour

**“As yet, it does not rise to the level of the other countries on the list. Likewise, Cuba is a country to watch but currently is not on the list.”**

## Marchers celebrate life; praise Brownback’s record

Rain, snow and wind didn’t stop hundreds of pro-life advocates from gathering January 22, at the Kansas Statehouse to mark the 45th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision.



**KFL Executive Director Mary Kay Culp welcomes Gov. Sam Brownback.**

The crowd marched from the Topeka Performing Arts Center to the steps of the Capitol carrying signs reading, “Choose Life” and “Stop Abortion Now.” The Topeka Knights of Columbus led the marchers along the route.

Father Mark Lovett of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Herington, described abortion as murder.

“This is a march for the protection and the sanctity of life, and it seems to me kind of obvious that we want to march in support of not ending the life of those who can’t support themselves, or who might be there accidentally,” Lovett said.

Kansans for Life organized the rally.

“A lot of people are in difficult situations and may not think that they have someone supporting them or that there is no other option,” said Tyler Supalla, a teacher from Saint James Academy in Lenexa, who came with about 50 students. “People who have an unplanned pregnancy—I think it’s good for them to know that we’re here, giving them an option, praying for them, showing that there are other options, and that we want to support life in any way we can.”

“What’s amazing to me is all of the young people that show up at this event year after year, and that really tells you about what Kansans are,” Lt. Gov. Jeff Colyer said.

Gov. Sam Brownback said the younger generation is the face of this movement. “It’s a young movement. It’s built on young legs and you see most of this crowd here is under the age of 20,” he said.

Attendees at the rally celebrated Brownback’s record on abortion, which includes signing 19 pro-life bills. He has called this the legacy of his tenure as governor. Kansas has seen 17,000 fewer abortions in the first six years of Brownback’s tenure than in the previous six years. Because of this accomplishment, Brownback received 17 red roses at the event. Each rose was presented by a child.

## Greater Kansas City Mayors’ Prayer Breakfast set for March 1

The 57th Annual Greater Kansas City Mayors’ Prayer Breakfast will be held Thursday morning, March 1 in the Grand Ballroom of the downtown Kansas City Convention Center, 7:30 a.m. through 9 a.m. Guest speaker at the Breakfast will be Lamar Hunt, Jr., owner of The Kansas City Mavericks hockey team.

Several hundred persons are expected at the Breakfast which is co-sponsored by more than thirty area Mayors. This year the Breakfast will benefit the non-profit Sheffield Place of Kansas City. For more than 26 years, Sheffield Place has provided help and healing toward self-sufficiency to homeless mothers and their children.

Tickets are \$50 each with options to secure a table of 10 for \$500 and may be purchased by emailing [kccmpb@aol.com](mailto:kccmpb@aol.com) or calling 816-863-0992.



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(from left) Jim Daly, Focus On The Family; Chuck Swindoll, Insight For Living; John MacArthur, Grace To You; June Hunt, Hope In The Night; Allisla Begg, Truth For Life; Tony Evans, The Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans; James MacDonald, Walk In The Word; David Jeremiah, Turning Point; Adnan Rogers, Love With Purpose; Crawford Lovitt, Legacy Moments; And Mariel Viall BOW Online for Program Schedules.

# CHURCH RETREATS

## Church retreats have rich history, important place

Church retreats are a tradition that goes back to the origins of camping itself and the "Brush Arbor" movement early in the previous century. But why exactly are church retreats so effective? It is the lack of distractions. Retreats are so productive because a retreat provides the opportunity for a concentrated time focused on spiritual objectives and relationships in a setting removed from the distractions of everyday life.

Let me give an example. Not long ago, I was involved in what turned into a protracted process to work out the details of a lease for some camp buildings. The process took almost nine months, mostly because of the delays in dealing with each message and proposal as they worked themselves between two principals and their attorneys. A message to the principal could wait for hours or days depending on the work load of the principal. After consideration, the message would then be

passed to their attorney, who was dealing with it along with his other clients. A response would eventually filter back through the same process in reverse, get passed back to us and on to our attorney. It took months.

By comparison, a good friend of mine's father was a partner in a major development and construction company, which was involved in building and sometimes owning downtown sky scrapers and shopping malls. When negotiations commenced for a project, they all met in a neutral setting for several days of face-to-face negotiations with all the parties and lawyers at the table. In a matter of days, they processed complexities light-years more advanced than my lease project. The difference; no distractions, no interruptions, no other clients, no other competing priorities, and no family responsibilities during that time period. As well, the productivity resulting from the trust relation-



ships built in these face-to-face settings was not possible at the end of e-mail, telephone calls, and brief meetings.

Retreats are similar. A weekend retreat is worth months of Sundays and mid-week meetings because of the lack of gaps and distractions. Add to this the relationships built as you share the retreat experience with others over a concentrated time, and the effectiveness of the retreat is even more pronounced.

The concept of a retreat is not unlike that of a vacation. You set aside all the distractions of everyday life for a time away dedicated to a particular purpose, which often includes developing and deepening relationships with family and others. Add to this the pleasures of someone else doing

the cooking, serving and clearing tables, taking care of the dishes and child care in some cases. It is almost like going out to eat five times in one weekend with a group of friends. There is ample opportunity to sit around the tables and have a nice chat. There are no pressing needs. You are away from it all.

Retreats work for all ages and for a variety of purposes. Adult retreats, especially women's retreats, are great for building relationships and focusing on spiritual needs. That is why they are so effective for groups like Alpha. Youth groups also benefit especially because of the opportunities for leaders to build relationships with students during the course of a weekend, which is simply not possible two hours at a time with a week in between.

Church retreats are a great way to accomplish many of the objectives of church ministries through a period of time away focused on relationships and spiritual development, without the daily distractions of our busy lives.

— Kirk Potter is Retreat Center Director at The Firs Camps and Retreats, Bellingham, Washington

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# Planning for success month-by-month guide

In any endeavor, failure to plan is planning to fail. This is especially true when it comes to a group retreat. The timeline for retreat promotion and registration may be several months. Below is a sample timeline:

**Four months:** Church establishes a “coordinator.” The coordinator will want to ask for volunteers to be responsible for the areas of finances, registration, promotion, program, site selection, food, etc. There is truth to the sentence: Many hands make light work. Leaders need to remember when asking people to serve that the benefit to serving is the personal relationships that develop within the church.

**Three months:** Retreat center websites often have a promotional kit on line for their groups to use for newsletter articles and bulletin inserts. Coordinator needs to publish dates early so people can schedule their schedule around the retreat. The coordinator needs to host a meeting with participants to provide financial deadlines and early bird discounts, schedule, travel details, etc. and provide time for those interested to ask questions. A coordinator needs to be sure that financial guidelines are clear and offer incentives to register early. Leaders need to promote retreats on social media such as facebook and twitter, and through church literature.

**Two months:** On a Sunday morning or in Sunday school class, have past attendees share their personal testimonies



concerning retreat experience from previous year. This will increase interest and increase the possibility of donations of scholarship money. Pictures are worth a million words. The promotion leader may ask past attendees to email pictures of the previous retreat or camp to the coordinator to organize a power point slide presentation for viewing before, during or after the service. The coordinator needs to make a special effort to personally invite students or adults. This can make all the difference in their decision to come.

**One month:** The registration leader may organize a “Retreat Sunday” with someone to take registrations. The leader may also organize a pancake breakfast or a baked potato luncheon

on that day to provide awareness for others to pray for the students who are



to attend camp.

**One Week After:** Ask the participants to share about their retreat experience with others. Fellow members will be

much more willing the following year to support you in your efforts when seeing how the retreat has revitalized attendees!



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## How to make a retreat personally effective

1. Choose a quiet place that offers comfort and the minimum of distractions but that makes it easy to break up your retreat time into short sessions with fun interludes between.

2. Schedule yourself loosely. If we bring the same busy schedule we are addicted to at home into our experience we will get very little out of it. Retreats are like Sabbath, meant to renew our connection to God and revitalize our relationships to each other.

3. Retreat with a friend or spouse. God speaks not just through scripture but also through those around us. Others can help us evaluate the effectiveness of our contemplative practices and their role in stirring our imagination.

4. Spend time in prayer and scripture reading. This can take many forms. You may like to start with a familiar psalm or gospel portion, or choose to read through a book of the bible.

5. Keep a journal. What are you grateful for? What was your biggest struggle? Where have you paid attention to God in your life this week? Use this material as foundations for your retreat process. You will find this is a wonderful way to explore the threads God is weaving in your life.

6. Break up your retreat time into “sittings” (or sessions). Normally these should not be for more than an hour; stop while you’re still enjoying it. Consider these sessions “prayer periods”—times of more formal interaction with God.

7. Between sessions, enjoy doing something that doesn’t require concentration such as taking a walk or hike. Do not do anything that distracts you like checking

your texts or surfing the internet.

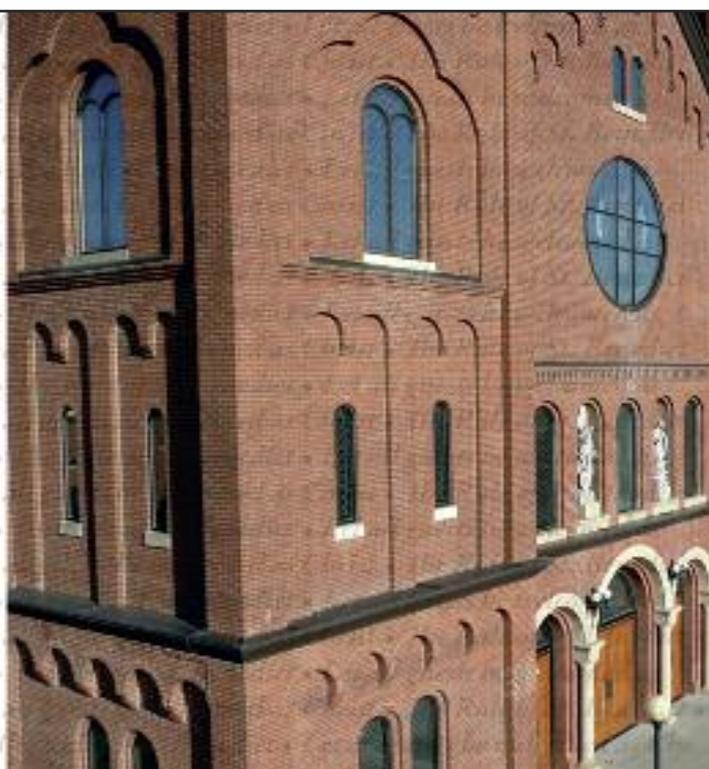
8. Use your retreat to create tangible goals for the next few months. Set goals for your spiritual life, personal well being, relationships, ministry, gardening and relaxation.

Let all guests be welcomed as Christ •

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Spring and summer are just around the corner so now is the time to plan your getaway weekend or vacation. And, what better way to relax, have fun and enjoy God's great creation than a leisurely canoe float down a pristine Ozark river. Living Waters Christian Canoe Ministry partners with two church camps to make a great weekend getaway or vacation for your family, church group or Scout troop at family-friendly prices that can't be beat. Check-out our website - [www.John738.com](http://www.John738.com) - and see for yourself.



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# Lessons of the past pave way for promising future

## Metro Voice publishers excited about transition to daily digital news site

### ■ METRO VOICE

continued from page 1

Cities. He found that trying to produce two publications was stretching his resources too thin and decided to sell Kansas City Christian. Fifteen people expressed interest before he made his decision.

"One of the best decisions I ever made was to sell the newspaper to Dwight Widaman," Hewitt said. "He had the talents and the time to make the newspaper something the city needed and deserved. Over the years, I have followed the newspaper's growth and have always been proud that I had a small part in at least birthing it."

After 29 years and more than 350 print issues and 4,913,200 copies of the paper distributed, Metro Voice is converting to a weekly digital newsletter. "A majority of people now get their information from digital devices," said Anita Widaman, Dwight's wife and business partner. "If we are going to reach the next generation and be part of informing them and getting them involved, this is where we need to be."

However, the Widamans emphasize, only the delivery method is changing. The commitment to the local Christian community that readers have come to trust will remain constant.

"We always saw ourselves as a newspaper for the entire Christian community," Dwight said. "If Christians can agree on the big things of orthodox Christianity— what binds us together, we can agree to disagree on the little things that tend to creep in and keep us apart. We never let the paper be a platform for any one particular pastor or church. We focus on issues that people can agree on while remaining true to our biblical, conservative values."

### In the beginning

Dwight faced a steep learning curve when he left a 9-to-5 job in marketing to become a self-employed publisher.

"I didn't have any business experience at all," he said. "I knew how to put ads together and do marketing, but in terms of sales, I had no experience. Bob Baldwin, who attended my church, had office space and let me use his desktop computer and printer at night."

Dwight published his first edition, with a circulation of 6,000, in June 1991. He kept the name, Kansas City Christian, and motto (A Voice for Our Times) for the first several years. He and Anita got married in 1993, and the following year he changed the name to Metro Voice (to reflect a city-wide scope), with the motto "Be Informed, Get Involved, Engage Your Faith". Although Anita didn't start working full time for the paper until 1995, she quickly found that being married to a newspaper publisher meant a few ad-



On a trip covering tsunami relief in India, Dwight stood on top of a truck to snap this photo of desperate survivors.



Anita in Petra, Jordan

justments.

"We used to drive to meet writers to pick up stories on floppy disks, and we had to physically paste up the paper using a wax machine," she said. "Later, it would take an entire afternoon to download an ad on a dial-up modem. When we were first married, Dwight would get phone calls at 11 or 12 at night from people who assumed he still was single. I had to groom him to turn off the business at 5 p.m. but as most small business owners understand, you are never 'off' work"

The Widamans have always operated Metro Voice as a hybrid of a ministry and a business, or a Dwight calls it, "a no-profit-for-profit". They experimented with a second publication, the Lee's Summit Tribune, as a tent-making business to support Metro Voice. They eventually sold the Tribune to the Olathe Daily News, which in turn was purchased by the Kansas City Star. They later launched a Metro Voice sister publication in Topeka, which continues to operate under Lee Hartman—its former managing editor.

The newspaper has always been a family affair. The Widamans' daughters, Hannah and Emma, grew up in the business. In fact, planning for their

education led to the founding of the paper's popular education fair, now in its 20th year.

"A lady once called from Blue Springs and said that 13 years earlier, she had attended the fair with her children as they were entering school and chose a private Christian school," Dwight said. "Now she was back with her oldest son looking for a Christian college. It was encouraging that we were able to provide a resource for her during two seasons in her family's life."

### Tackling tough issues

Nowhere is the line between ministry and business harder to walk than in deciding what issues to cover and how to cover them. Dwight clearly realized the power of the press, for good or bad, while covering the pro-life Summer of Mercy in Wichita in 1991.

"I got there early in the media park-

ing lot and a CNN crew pulled up next to me," he said. "They were unloading, and one of the employees said, 'let's go cover these nuts.' That was their intention. It wasn't to cover a pro-life event honestly; it was to put them in worst light possible."

**"One of the best decisions I ever made was to sell the newspaper to Dwight Widaman. He had the talents and the time to make the newspaper something the city needed and deserved."**

—Steve Hewitt

"So 27 years ago, I saw a definite media bias against Christians and conservative values. Fake news has been around for a long time. That's why it's important to have a

Christian news source in the community, whether print or digital, where you know there is no anti-Christian bias."

He put that belief into action when he published a graphic story about partial-birth abortion in both the Metro Voice and the Tribune in the mid-90s. "Dwight published photos and wrote in depth about what it was," Anita said. "Our salesperson cautioned, 'it will destroy you', but we published it anyhow. We had to take a stand."

"We lost a few churches who felt the

■ continued on next page

image was too disturbing for their congregations," Anita remembers. "The truth is very often disturbing but it must not be ignored."

Faith and politics can be a volatile mix, even in the Christian community.

"In the earlier years, our paper was more political during the height of the culture wars," Dwight said. "But as our nation has become more post-Christian in its outlook, we've turned more to the persecuted church. The American church isn't the end-all, be-all of Christianity. Some of the most vibrant Christianity you find today is in the Third World. They are under severe persecution, yet are more committed to their faith than many Americans who have become complacent in their lifestyles."

Being all things to all people is not an option. "Some churches found us too conservative," he said, "and some found us too liberal because we include movie reviews."



The March of Remembrance, honoring Holocaust survivors, is one lasting legacy of the Widamans' involvement in local organizations.

The Widamans have made it a priority to serve all of the local Christian community – north and south of the river, east and west of Troost Avenue, and on both sides of the state line.

"One issue that has always been important to us is the divide between black and white Christians," Dwight said. "We always felt a responsibility to bridge that divide by covering concerns in the black community. It is important to give them a voice.

"One issue where we were prescient of future issues was in 1994. We ran a cover story about Ron Freeman and had a contemporary artistic portrait of him as a proud, strong black man with an African motif tie. They story was about how conservative African-Americans were changing the face of the Republican party. That was important, because the party was going through a change and we were going through the culture wars. Some of the

issues we were talking about 25 years ago calling the Christian community to action have been realized in public policy."

Secrets to success

Countless newspapers across the nation – both Christian and secular – have fallen by the wayside in the past three decades. By Dwight's count, four other Christian newspapers have attempted to start up and publish in the Kansas City market but failed after less than a year. In 2018 Metro Voice became the oldest independent Christian newspaper in North America.

The Widamans credit much of their success to tireless volunteers, loyal advertisers and the many churches and businesses that distribute Metro Voice.

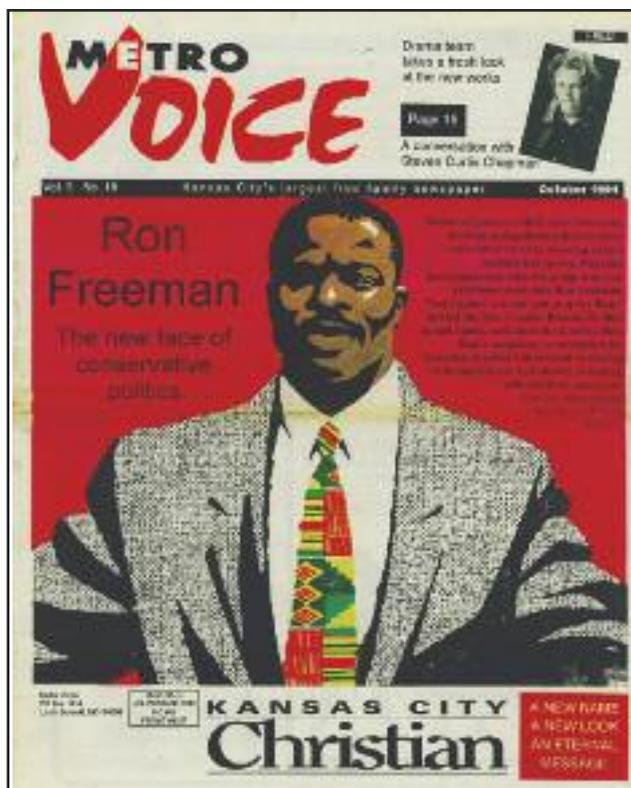
Volunteers. A few volunteers came over from Kansas City Christian, while many others have joined over the years. "When we first got engaged, the volunteers would get together monthly at Connie Blunt's house and all bring food for a potluck," Anita said. "I would go there and enjoy the discussions. There was such a give and take of ideas about what stories to run."

Advertisers. "Our longest-running supporter since the beginning is Bott Radio Network,

Dwight said. "They have been in pretty much every issue since we started. We also have many longtime supporters, such as Bill Lewis with

continued on next page

"In the earlier years, our paper was more political during the height of the culture wars. But as our nation has become more post-Christian in its outlook, we've turned more to the persecuted church."



Lewis Living Trust, Beacon Bible Bookstore, Greater Pentecostal Temple in KCK, Alan Jones CPA, and Eugene Anderson Dental. Many of them advertise out of a heart connection and see it as a ministry. One hundred percent of our regular advertisers have chosen to stay with us in our new digital venture. Instead of a one-dimensional print ad, we can now promote them across multiple platforms and provide new opportunities to connect them with readers."

■ **Churches.** "Our strength has always been the small- to medium-sized churches," he said. "Those pastors are much more involved in their communities on a personal level than pastors of large churches. I can walk into their church and visit with the pastor."

Years of hard work culminated in recognition by the Evangelical Press Association (EPA) at last year's national convention.

"It's just been Anita and me plus a

few helpers putting together the paper, with no big corporation or denomination behind us," Dwight said. "We've plowed everything we've made back into the paper. Every year I would get a little sad, because as a member of the EPA, we would always submit our three samples for newspaper of the year. For

many of those years, we would compete with denominational papers with large budgets and millions of members. And then there's us working out of our basement office.

"In 2017, we submitted our issues and won newspaper of the year, called the award of excellence, and selected not by Christians in the industry but by secular people looking at the paper objectively. We were so shocked when our name was called. It was emotional to go up and accept that award after 28 years of producing the paper."

**Brave new world**

Though the Widamans launched metrovoicenews.com way back in 1998, the conversion to an exclusively digital-only format was inevitable, the paper's founder said. "All print publications have had to make a move from paper to digital," Hewitt said. "This has little to do with the price of paper and more to do with



It was a cold January day in 2017 as Dwight and Anita covered the inauguration.



Covering the National March for Life, Anita and Emma (r) were connected with friend Elise.

the fact that we have moved from the mass media age to the personal com-

munication age. "Publications, articles, editorials and

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**METRO VOICE** what's inside: **FREE!**  
 Kansas City's Largest Family Newspaper January 1998  
**Protecting our Children from a Plague of Pessimism**  
 I've never seen a person so sad...  
 See page 4

**METRO VOICE** Inside: **FREE!**  
 Kansas City's Largest Family Newspaper January 1997  
**Sexual messages deny sacredness of marriage**  
**Miss America's Faith**  
**TV-50 sold**  
 Are you investing in same-sex marriage?  
 Mutual fund owners of investment companies

**METRO VOICE** Inside: **FREE!**  
 Kansas City's Largest Family Newspaper June 1998  
**Local missionary murdered**  
**Eight was not enough**  
**Senate OK's Education Savings Accounts**  
**A Choir of Millions...**

**METRO VOICE** Inside: **FREE!**  
 Kansas City's Largest Family Newspaper February 1999  
**National Turn Off TV Day this Month**  
**Spring has sprung**  
**Y2K**  
**Special Report: Area stores meeting need**

**METRO VOICE** Now available at area Wal-Mart's! Inside: **FREE!**  
 Kansas City's Largest Family Newspaper November 2000  
**2000 Voter Guide**  
**Ballot Measures**  
**Christians most involved since 1980**

**METRO VOICE** Inside: **FREE!**  
 Kansas City's Largest Family Newspaper Oct 2001  
**Fighting Winters winds**  
**Special Color Coverage: America Responds**  
**Baptist Church to help take back neighborhood**

opinions all need to be presented in an electronic format, which allows the reader to feel a greater connection to the source, as well as provide them a way to provide feedback and opinion.

Also, if a user is impressed by an article, it is easier to share with friends and family, greatly increasing the distribution of the information."

Dwight agreed. "We knew that the print run would end at some point," he said. "The Lord was working in the background. Our paper has never been more influential than it is today. I look at our website and see stories that have regularly gotten 11,000 views online. Some stories have been read by 50,000 or 60,000 people. We are transitioning from a print publication to a digital publication at the height of our influence, where we can do the

most good."

The website is now the number one Christian site in the Kansas City area.

Readers who opt in by email at www.metrovoicenews.com or on Facebook will receive free weekly electronic newsletters.

"Each newsletter will have 10 or 15 breaking stories," Dwight said. "People can click on those that interest them, which will take them to our website. We are not limited to 24 pages of newsprint. We have an unlimited amount of space, and we can cover late-breaking news and really become a daily news source."

Anita looks forward to the opportunity to shine a brighter spotlight on all of the good things that are happening in the local Christian community.

"I hope readers here in the Kansas City region know that we are a trusted



In 2004, Hannah and Anita Widaman participated in an event recognizing area Christian organizations.

source of information," she said. "God has given different gifts to people. We see the different areas where Christians have come to serve their fellow man, and as a community we need to encourage those areas. There are so many

opportunities for people to serve and engage their faith. If people would step out and do it, we could make a difference."

Dwight hopes to build on a lesson that God recently reinforced in his life.

"My 92-year-old mom passed away a few weeks ago," he said. "When she was a child and then as a young woman in the 1940s and 50s, she attended a community church in her rural hometown of just 130 residents. Each Sunday, a pastor representing a different denomination would take the pulpit. It's the same for Anita's country church where she grew up.

"When I saw the photos and articles about the church that my mom placed in a scrapbook, it made me realize that today most lack that sense of community. We want Metro Voice to continue to be that shared community across denominational lines."

Dwight and Anita embrace the digital future and encourage their readers to do the same. They are convinced the best is yet to come for Metro Voice. "The print version of the newspaper is only a tool," Dwight said. "We're moving on, giving up one tool and taking on another tool to continue what we are doing."



# Longtime supporters excited about transition

Metro Voice has touched thousands of readers, ministry leaders and advertisers over the past 29 years. Several of them shared their thoughts about its longtime impact and exciting future.

"Metro Voice has across its history been one of the key communication pieces that has kept the greater Kansas City community informed of activities and services of the Christian community in our area. The vision and perseverance of Dwight and Anita Widaman have benefited the diverse arms of Christianity, who seldom met each other or even knew of the other's existence yet are working for the same ultimate goals. Whether it be in the field of education, politics, church ministry or supportive church services, Metro Voice has helped keep us together.

"Kansas Christian College and Over-

land Christian Schools salute Dwight and Anita for their labor of love and wish them well as they keep pace with the times in moving to a digital format only. May God richly bless you both and give you strength for your labor!"

-- Delbert Scott  
President  
Kansas Christian College  
Overland Park



Scott



Handley

"One of the things I have appreciated about Metro Voice over the many years is the Kingdom mentality they have brought to the people of Kansas City. As long as God is glorified and exalted, the Widamans produced Christian reporting excellence every single month. I always looked forward to reading their monthly news to see what God was doing in the Kansas City metro area and in the

world. I eagerly look forward to seeing their transition to a full digital newsletter."

-- Rod Handley  
President  
Character That Counts  
Lee's Summit



Kenney

"I have watched over the years as Metro Voice has grown and grown! Because of God's grace and two dedicated people, Dwight and Anita Widaman, the entire body of Christ has been blessed to be able to network and grow in so many ways. It is amazing to me how the newspaper meets so very many needs in our Christian community. I love keeping up with the news, politics, looking for recommendations on movies and viewing all of the things going on in both Kansas City and Topeka.

"It is difficult for me to fathom how Dwight and Anita can wear so many hats and network with so many people as they have for years. Dwight and Anita, please let me thank you again for your diligence, your resilience with the changing times and also your amazing contribution to the body of Christ."

-- Sandi Kenney  
Kenney Sales Team  
Lenexa



Martin

"Metro Voice has been a beacon of hope and has provided encouragement and news for the Christian community faithfully. It has shared the good news in many ways, including many ministries activities and events to encourage and strengthen the Kingdom. It is my expectation this will continue in its digital format and will even reach a new gener-

ation of readers as it makes this transition.

"My congratulations to Dwight and Anita Widaman for their vision and for their commitment to this ministry. We wish them the best as they make the change to the digital-only format, and we pledge our continued support and encouragement."

-- Russell Martin  
President  
Missouri Baptist Children's Home  
Bridgeton, Mo.



McCarroll

"Heart of America Bible College and Christian Academy have advertised with and distributed Metro Voice for as many years as they have been publishing. We have found that this has been very beneficial to our ministry to get

■ continued on next page



the word out to our metro area about what we are doing for the Kingdom of God. Our prayers and best wishes to Dwight and Anita in their new endeavor."

-- Carroll McCarroll  
President  
Heart of America Bible College  
Kansas City



Lewis

"The reason I support Metro Voice is I want to encourage Christian publications. I support Dwight and Anita as they get out the messages that Christians need to know. I'm not into digital as much as some people -- I'm one of the dinosaurs -- but it's a fact of life today, and many people get their news through that mechanism. If you're in the business, you have to move where the business is. You have to go where the people are."

-- Bill Lewis  
Lewis Law Office  
Lee's Summit

### SHARING THE WORLD, ONE STORY AT A TIME

Dwight and Anita Widaman work from the basement of their home in rural Pleasant Hill. However, their business and ministry have enabled them to experience many events and adventures, both locally and around the world.

"One of the best experiences for me was when I went to Jordan, missed my flight but met regular Jordanians," Anita said. "I met with a woman who, along with her husband, were missionaries in Jordan and I learned about the risks they take. They later visited us in our home."

She and Dwight both have developed a deep love for Israel through their travels to the Holy Land.

"The opportunity to go to Israel is phenomenal," Dwight said. "I've been there four times. Over the years, we have developed relationships with people inside and outside the government. That has spurred our educational nonprofit called Vision Israel (visionisrael.com)."

The Widamans always share their ex-

In 2015, the Widamans toured Israel writing extensively about it. Here at Hezekiah's Tunnel.



periences in the pages of Metro Voice to help readers expand their worldview.

"Everybody seems to have a desire to go to Israel and get a view for what it is, correct misperceptions and be given an accurate view of what's going on," Anita said.

Some trips have been educational,

while others served the needy. Dwight traveled to Jamaica with Food for the Poor and to India to cover relief efforts following the Dec. 2004 tsunami.

Still other trips were political in nature and provided context for writing about current events.

"We were able to go to the Republican convention in 2008 and hear Sarah Palin," Anita said. "It was such an electrifying experience. I got to meet her again at the Vitae Foundation dinner. She was authentic and not at all how the media portrays her."

Another highlight for Anita was attending the Seminar for Christian Leaders sponsored by The School for Holocaust Studies at the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. "There we heard from international scholars concerning the Holocaust as well as present day anti-semitism. One memorable experience was listening to the survivor testimonies of Nachum and Genya Manor who were saved by Oskar Schindler as workers in his factory."

Most importantly, Dwight and Anita return from their trips with a clearer vision for their newspaper.

"Last year, we wanted to cover the inauguration after a tumultuous election," Dwight said. "After the ceremony and on our way to view the parade, we found ourselves in the middle of anti-government rioters, fires and police in riot gear."

"The following day," Anita says, "on our way to tour the Holocaust Museum we had to take a huge detour. When we exited the subway to the Mall, we found ourselves in the middle of the women's march. The vulgarity and nudity displayed at the march, including their signs and photos, were disturbing. We saw how the media covered-up that aspect. Anita says she was able to juxtapose the annual March for Life in Washington D.C. (which she attended with daughter Emma and friends from Connecticut) and the 2017 womens' march.

"The difference in the spirit behind each event is clear. And we witnessed it first-hand."



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# the events calendar

Compiled by Anita Widaman

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[metrovoicelcalendar@gmail.com](mailto:metrovoicelcalendar@gmail.com)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Your item must be in by  
the 3rd Wednesday of each month for  
following month's issue.

**Family Events, Christian Concerts, Theatre, Youth Events, Meetings, Clubs, Bible Studies, Family Fun, Speakers and More!**

## CONCERTS

**PIC AND BOW.** February 2, 7:30 pm. Homer's Coffee House, 7126 W. 80th St., Overland Park, KS.

**DEEP AND WIDE TOUR, ANDY STANLEY.** February 12, 9:00 am. Westside Family Church, 8500 Woodsonia Drive, Lenexa, KS 66227. 913-422-8257.

**SWEET SPIRIT & FRIENDS MUSIC OUTREACH.** February 17, 6:00 pm. Moment of Truth Bible Baptist Church, 310 Randolph Road, Kansas City, MO 64119. Chili and music that will uplift you're your! 816-452-4426.

**TOBYMAC HITS DEEP TOUR.** February 23, 7:00 pm. Sprint Center, 1407 Grand Boulevard, Kansas City, MO 64106. Featuring: Toby Mac, Danny Gokey, Mandisa, Ryan Stevenson, and Finding Favor, and Aaron Cole. 816-949-7100.

**JIM COLE.** February 25, 2:00 pm. Pisgah Baptist Church, 112 Pisgah Drive, Excelsior Springs, MO 64024. Free admission. 816-630-5121.

**THE GARMS FAMILY.** February 8, 7:00 pm. First Christian Church, 2151 S. Jefferson Street, Kearney, MO 64060. 816-628-6653.

**WINTER JAM.** March 16, 7:00 pm. Sprint Center, 1407 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64106.



**FEB. 23** TOBYMAC HITS DEEP TOUR. 7:00 PM. SPRINT CENTER, 1407 GRAND BOULEVARD, KANSAS CITY, MO 64106

**HOPE IS THE MESSAGE TOUR.** April 7, 7:00 pm. Word of Life Church, St. Joseph, MO. With 'We Are

Messengers', 'David Dunn', and 'JJ Weeks Band'.

**ISAACS IN CONCERT.** April 13. 7:00 pm. Cowen

Memorial Auditorium. Kansas Christian College. Tickets: [kansaschristian.edu](http://kansaschristian.edu). 913-722-0272.

**SKILLET IN CONCERT.** April 14. ExpoCentre, Topeka, KS. Featuring: Joy Unleashed-The Tour, For King and Country. Ticketmaster.com

## SOUTHERN GOSPEL (Call for groups)

**SWEET SPIRIT & FRIENDS.** Will not be having music outreach for November and December, see you in January 2018.

**ALPHA OMEGA CHRISTIAN MUSIC ASSOCIATION MONTHLY MEETING, PRAYER, DEVOTION, POTLUCK AND JAM.** FIRST FRIDAY, 7pm. 10035 E. Westport Rd., Indep., MO 64052.

**MO-KAN GOSPEL MUSIC ASSOCIATION POTLUCK AND JAM.** FOURTH FRIDAY (except for Nov. & Dec. when we meet on the 3rd Fri.). Northland Christian Church, 6120 NE 48th St., KCMO. 913-432-0359.

**LIVE CHRISTIAN MUSIC VENUE.** THIRD FRIDAY, 7:00 pm. Bent Knee Cowboy, 13415 S. 142nd St., Bonner Springs, KS. 913-927-4567.

**PENTECOSTAL TABERNACLE CHURCH.** SEC-

OND SATURDAY, 6pm. 341 S. 72nd St., Kansas City, KS 66111. Praise and Worship songs of Zion. 913-334-1009.

**CGMA NW MO CHAPTER MEETING, GOSPEL MUSIC AND POTLUCK.** SECOND SATURDAY. Faith Assembly of God Church, South 13 Hwy, Polo, MO. Travel North on I-35 North, go North of Liberty to the Polo/Lathrop Exit. Turn right onto 116 Hwy. Go 12 miles to 13 Hwy. Turn left and go ¼ mile. [pegcla@msn.com](mailto:pegcla@msn.com).

**RADIANT LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD.** LAST SUNDAY, 6:30 p.m. Hwy. 33, Kearney, MO. Open mike. Gospel sing.

**PARADISE BAPTIST CHURCH.** SECOND SUNDAY, 6 p.m. Pot luck dinner at 5 p.m. Paradise Missouri. 816-591-1020.

## CLASSES, SEMINARS, CONFERENCES

**HER CHOICE TO HEAL AND RECONCILIATION WEEKEND.** Are you struggling emotionally and spiritually after having an abortion? We offer a grace-filled journey for healing and restoration. Sponsored by: If Not For Grace Ministries. Contact

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**AN EVENING WITH DR. SEAN McDOWELL.** February 1, 6:30 pm-8:00 pm. Summit Christian Academy, 1450 SW Jefferson Street, Lee's Summit, MO 64081. Free. Sean will share how a biblical view of truth can counter cultural tolerance and encourage a love and acceptance of others apart from their actions with a heart of Christlike compassion.

**SATISFIED-A SINGLES EVENT.** February 2, 6:00 pm-9:00 pm. Grace Church, 606 S. Camden Richmond, Overland Park, KS. \$25 in advance. Enjoy dinner, worship and hear from David Marvin, Young Adults pastor at Watermark Community Church in Dallas. There will be 5 breakout sessions. 913-814-7223.

**LOVE INSPIRED FOR LIFE, ANNUAL EVENT FOR WOMEN.** February 2, 7:00 pm & February 3, 9:00 am. Church of Resurrection, 13720 Roe Ave., Leawood, KS 66224. 913-544-0771.

**VALOR & VIRTUE CONFERENCE.** February 3, 7:00 am. Abundant Life Church, 304 S.W. Persels, Lee's Summit, MO. Keynote speaker: Josh McDowell.

**DRIVING RISK AWARENESS FOR TEENS.** February 5, 10:00 am-11:30 am. Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City, 5801 W. 115th St., Overland Park, KS. Free. Learn about driving risks for teens and create a teen-parent driving agreement. Open to all 9th & 10th graders and their parents. 913-327-8259.

**"AVOID PROBATE" SEMINARS.** February 15, 7:00 pm. Lewis Living Trust Center, 700 NE Langsford, Lee's Summit, MO 64063. 816-524-3200.

**WORK AS WORSHIP: 1-DAY LOCAL CHURCH RETREAT.** February 23, 7:15 am-3:00 pm. Leawood Presbyterian Church, 2715 W. 83rd St., Leawood, KS 66206. \$25. Join other Christian business owners, CEO's, & leaders who want their faith to impact their work. 913-649-1144.

**WEEKEND TO REMEMBER.** February 23-February 25. Overland Park Marriott, 10800 Metcalf Av-

enue, Overland Park, KS 66225. Sponsored by FamilyLife.

**20TH MIDWEST CHRISTIAN K-12 EDUCATION & COLLEGE EXPO.** February 24, 10:00 am-2:00 pm. Colonial Presbyterian Church, 9500 Wornall, Kansas City, MO. FREE! 25 K-12 School, Home-school, 50 Colleges from 16 states! Free workshops on financial aid, homeschooling, and parent panel. Watch for more details! metrovoicenews.com 816-524-4522

**SOUTH KANSAS CITY AGLOW.** February 28, 9:30 am. New Vision Christian Center, 12400 Grandview Road, Grandview, MO 64030. (816) 966-1033.

**BEARING ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS BIBLICALLY: TRAIN UP A CHILD.** March 2-3. Faith Community Church, 3500 Prather Rd., Kansas City, MO 64116. Sponsored by Reigning Grace Counseling Center. 816-694-1677.

**CRISIS COUNSELING SEMINAR.** March 9-10. Heart of America Ministries Church-Bible College & Theological Seminary, 7600 Blue Ridge Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64138. 816-226-7061.

**WEEKEND TO REMEMBER.** March 9-March 11. Overland Park Marriott, 10800 Metcalf Avenue, Overland Park, KS 66225. Sponsored by FamilyLife.

**SKILLBUILDERS.** March 20 - May 22. Tuesdays. 9:30 meet and greet. 9:45 program. The Palmer Center, 218 A North Pleasant, Independence Mo. Education and support for widows, widowers and caregivers. Co-ordinated by Heartland Widowed Persons Service. No charge. 816-333-9200.

**SKILLBUILDERS.** March 22 - May 24. Thursday. 9:30 meet and greet. 10:00 program. Tomahawk Ridge Com. Center, 11902 Lowell Blvd., OPKS. Education and support for widows, widowers and caregivers. Co-ordinated by Heartland Widowed Persons Service. No charge. 913-850-7500.

**SKILLBUILDERS.** March 23 - May 25. Friday. 10:00 meet and greet. 10:15 program. Platte County Resource Center, 11724 NW Plaza Circle,

KCMO Education and support for widows, widowers and caregivers. Co-ordinated by Heartland Widowed Persons Service. No charge. 816-333-9200

**BELIEVE.** March 23, 7:30 pm & March 24, 9:30 am. Kansas City Convention Center, 301 W. 13th St., Kansas City, MO 64105. Speakers: Jeff Walling, Merci Neff, Kaled Dance Crew. 417-781-2273.

**BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP.** March 24, 9:45 am-12:00 pm. Stranger Rest Baptist Church, 2052 N. 5th St., Kansas City, KS. There is no charge to attend!! Six week support group 9:45 am-10:00 am - Coffee, Meet and Great. 10:00 am-12:00 pm - Support Group. 913-371-7237.

**ARISE 2018 WOMEN'S CONFERENCE.** April 5-8, 10:00 am. World Revival Church, 9900 View High Drive, Kansas City, MO 64134. Featuring Kathy



**FEB. 12** ANDY STANLEY - DEEP AND WIDE TOUR. FEBRUARY 12, 9:00 AM. WESTSIDE FAMILY CHURCH, 8500 WOODSONIA DRIVE, LENEXA, KS 66227. 913-422-8257



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**29TH ANNUAL HOMESCHOOL CONFERENCE AND CURRICULUM FAIR.** April 6-7, 9:00 am. KCI

Expo Center, 11730 N. Ambassador Dr., Kansas City, MO 64153. Sponsored by Midwest Parent Educators. 913-599-0311.

**SPECIAL CHURCH EVENTS**

**LIVE & NOT DIE KC A CALL TO 40 DAYS OF FASTING AND PRAYER.** Through February 25. There were 149 homicides in KCMO in 2017. www.turncrusade.org 816-529-8261.

**CLASSICAL COFFEE HOUSE.** February 3, 7:00 pm. Greenleaf, 19976 W. 162nd St., Olathe, KS 66062. \$5 admission. 913-397-7071.

**KANSANS FOR LIFE VALENTINE BANQUET.** February 8, 5:00 (Silent Auction/Social Time); 7:00 pm (Banquet & Program). Ritz-Charles, 137th & Antioch, Overland Park, KS. Speaker: Sue Ellen Browder. 913-642-5433.

**PASTOR SERVE PASTOR'S APPRECIATION BREAKFAST.** February 8, 6:45 am. Macedonia Baptist Church, 1700 Linwood Blvd., Kansas City, MO. 877-918-4746.

**NIGHT TO SHINE KC.** February 9, 6:00 pm. Arrowhead Stadium, 1 Arrowhead Dr., Kansas City, MO 64129. Unforgettable prom night experience, centered on God's love, for people with special needs, ages 14 and older. We need hundreds of volunteers. 816-359-2699.

**PUPPET SHOW.** February 10, 3:00 pm-4:00 pm. De Soto United Methodist Church, 8760 Kill Creek rd., De Soto, KS 66018. Join us for Stonelion Puppet Theatre's presentation of "The Sweet Shoppe." 913-582-1359.

**PROJECT REFORMATION: A JOURNEY OF FAITH DOCUMENTED FREE PUBLIC SCREENING.** February 10, 7:00 pm. Oak Park Mall, Culture House Stage & Studio, 11149 W. 95th St., Overland Park, KS 66214. Sponsored by: The Culture House and Restoration SHIFT. The film documents the spiritual warfare they encounter as they sought the Lord to save their marriage and the journey of faith that led them into the ministry of reconcilia-



**FEB. 24 20TH MIDWEST CHRISTIAN K-12 EDUCATION & COLLEGE EXPO. FEBRUARY 24, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM. COLONIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 9500 WORNALL, KANSAS CITY,**

tion. 816-332-1200.

www.restorationshift.com/events

**OPENING RALLY!** February 14, 9:00 am. Center for Women's Health Abortion Facility, 4840 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS. Bill Velker with Life International will be speaking. Rally will be held on the public sidewalk outside the Center for Women's Health Abortion Facility. 40daysfor-lifekc@gmail.com

**SPRING 2018, 40 DAYS OF LIFE!** February 14, 9:00 am. Center for Women's Health Abortion Facility, 4840 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS.

**FAMBLITZ LIVE.** February 17, 3:00 pm or 6:00 pm. Woods Chapel United Methodist Church, 4725 NE Lakewood Way, Lee's Summit, MO 64064.

FREE! FamBlitz Live is a fast-paced, high-energy, family-oriented event sponsored by WCC Children's Ministry. Think Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards with a Super Bowl atmosphere! Seating is limited, so registration is required. 816-795-8848.

**KINDERGARTEN PREVIEW.** February 8 & 9, 8:30 am-10:30 am. Summit Christian Academy,

1500 SW Jefferson, Lee's Summit, MO 64081. 816-524-0185.

**EARLY EDUCATION PREVIEW.** February 22 & 23, 8:30 am-10:30 am. Summit Christian Academy, 1500 SW Jefferson, Lee's Summit, MO 64081. 816-524-0185.

**20TH MIDWEST CHRISTIAN K-12 EDUCATION & COLLEGE EXPO.** February 24, 10:00 am-2:00 pm. Colonial Presbyterian Church, 9500 Wornall, Kansas City, MO. FREE! 25 K-12 School, Home-school, 50 Colleges from 16 states! Fee workshops on financial aid, homeschooling, and parent panel. Watch for more details! metrovoicenews.com 816-524-4522

**DISCOVER MARANATHA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY.** March 1, 6:00 pm. Maranatha Christian Academy Gym Campus, 15000 W. 63rd Street, Shawnee, KS 66216. For families that would like to learn more about Christian education and Maranatha Christian Academy. 913-631-0637.

**2018 57TH ANNUAL GREATER KANSAS CITY MAYOR'S PRAYER BREAKFAST.** March 1, 7:30

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**Missouri Right to Life**

**"Show Me Life" Pro-Life Action Day**

**Tuesday, March 13, 2018**

(registration begins at 10:00 a.m.)

**Missouri State Capitol ~ 1st Floor Rotunda**



**"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."**

Dr. Seuss *The Lorax*

**We need you to ACT!**

- Come to Jefferson City for Pro-Life Action Day to lobby your legislators and to encourage them to pass pro-life legislation.
- Join the Noon Rally for inspiration, information, and instruction for the best pro-life action!

**Featured Speaker for the Noon Rally**

**Carol Tobias. National Right to Life Committee President**

**Transportation is available from many areas of the state.**

Contact the Missouri Right to Life State Office, 573.635.5110, or visit [www.missourilife.org](http://www.missourilife.org) for further information.

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[www.missourilife.org](http://www.missourilife.org)



**FEB. 24** **HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS. 7:00 PM. SPRINT CENTER, 1407 GRAND BLVD., KANSAS CITY, MO. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 816-949-7100.**

**SHREK-THE MUSICAL.** February 22-February 25. Bell Cultural Events Center Mid-America Nazarene University, 2030 E. College Way, KS 66062. Sponsored by CYT Kansas City. 913-681-3318.

**FINDING NEVERLAND.** February 27-March 4. Kansas City Music Hall, 301 W. 13th St., Kansas City, MO 64105.

**TUCK EVERLASTING.** February 27-March 31. The Coterie Theatre, 2450 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64108. 816-474-6552.

**BROADWAY'S GOLDEN AGE.** March 1-March 18. Music Theater Heritage, Crown Center, 2450 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, MO. The decade of the 1950's was Broadway's Golden Age. 816-221-6987.

**THE MUSIC MAN (SOUTH).** March 8- March 11. Bell Cultural Events Center Mid-America Nazarene University, 2030 E. College Way, KS 66062. Sponsored by CYTKC. 913-681-3318.

**KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY PRESENTS CLASSICS UNCORKED: AT THE MOVIES.** March 8, 7:00 pm. Helzberg Hall, 1601 Broadway Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64108. Epic movies need epic

music. 816-471-0400.

**RIVERDANCE-THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY WORLD TOUR.** March 16, 7:30 pm; March 17, 2:30 pm; March 17, 7:30 pm. Muriel Kauffman Theatre,

1601 Broadway Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64108.

For full list of events visit [metrovoicenews.com](http://metrovoicenews.com)

am-9:00 am. Kansas City Convention Center, Grand Ballroom, Kansas City, MO. \$50.00 each. Guest Speaker: Lamar Hunt, Jr.

**"SHOW ME LIFE" PRO-LIFE ACTION DAY.** March 13, 10:00 am. Missouri State Capital, 1st Floor Rotunda, Jefferson City, MO 65102. Featured Speaker for the Noon Rally, Carol Tobias, National Right to Life Committee President. Lobby your legislator. Registration begins at 10:00 am, Rally begins at Noon. 573-635-5110.

**LIFELINE'S SHARE THE STORY: HOPE EMBRACED DINNER.** April 5, 6:00 pm. Fellowship Bible Church, 6800 SW 10 Ave., Topeka, KS 66615. Tickets are \$10. Highlights what God has done in the lives of children and families with lifeline. 785-478-0002.

**NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER.** May 3.

**NATIONAL RIGHT TO LIFE CONVENTION, KANSAS.** June 28, 29, 30. Overland Park, KS. [nrl-convention.com](http://nrl-convention.com) [www.nrlc.org](http://www.nrlc.org) 202-626-8800.

**FINE ARTS**

**THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC.** Through February 18. Quality Hill Playhouse, 303 W. 10th St., Kansas City, MO 64105. 816-421-1700.

**DREAMS OF THE KINGS: A JADE SUIT FOR ETERNITY-TREASURES OF THE HAN DYNASTY FROM XUZHOU.** Through April 1. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 4525 Oak St., Kansas City, MO 64111.

**C.S. LEWIS ONSTAGE: THE MOST RELUCTANT CONVERT.** February 2, February 3, 4:00 pm. Kauffman Center for Performing Arts, 1601 Broadway Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64108.

**HONK, JR.** February 15-18. Bell Cultural Events Center Mid-America Nazarene University, 2030 E. College Way, KS 66062. Sponsored by CYT Kansas City. 913-681-3318.

**THE BEAR NECESSITIES.** February 17 & February 19. Puppetry Arts Institute, 11025 E. Winner Rd., Independence, MO 64052. 816-833-9777.

**NORTHLAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.** February 17, 7:30 pm. Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church, 7600 NW Barry Road, Kansas City, MO 64153. Pieces include Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, K. 611, with clarinet soloist Cindy Svehla, and Bloch's Concerto Grosso No. 1. 816-945-2436.

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 Evangelistic (Vesper) Service 6:30 PM  
 Evening Bible Study 7:00 PM  
 Youth Department Meeting 7:00 PM

**Sunday**  
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 Sunday School  
 Relationship Class 9:00 AM  
 Praise & Worship 10:00 AM

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**Class Locations and Times**

March 20 – May 22. Tuesdays. 9:30 meet and greet. 9:45 program. The Palmer Center, 218 A North Pleasant, Independence, MO 64050

March 22 – May 24. Thursday. 9:30 meet and greet. 10:00 program. Tomahawk Ridge Comm. Center, 11902 Lowell Blvd., OPKS 66213

March 23 – May 25. Friday. 10:00 meet and greet. 10:15 program. Platte County Resource Center, 11724 NW Plaza Circle, KCMO 64153

**913-383-2519 [www.widowedpersonsservice.org](http://www.widowedpersonsservice.org)**

# entertainment

MOVIES, STREAMING, BOOKS, MUSIC, INTERVIEWS & MORE!

## Inspirational 'Wonder' tops February DVD releases

### movienews

by **Michael Foust**

Auggie Pullman is an energetic and smart 10-year-old who is like most boys his age. He enjoys video games, Star Wars and all-things-NASA.

Except that he's not like any other boy his age. He looks different. He sounds different. When he enters a room, people stare.

Auggie was born with facial differences, and even though he's undergone multiple surgeries to improve his hearing and his looks, he still stands out in a crowd. That's one reason he wears a toy-like space helmet. Sure, it conveys his passion for science, but it also hides his face.

But now Auggie is exiting the comfortable confines of homeschooling and entering fifth grade in a public setting—a setting that could lead to stares, scorn and ridicule.

Will his classmates accept him?

The 2017 inspirational hit *Wonder* (PG) will release on DVD Feb. 13 and digital platforms Jan. 30, giving families the opportunity to watch and discuss



one of the best films ever made on the subject of bullying. It stars Jacob Tremblay as Auggie, Owen Wilson as his father, Julia Roberts as his mom, and Izabela Vidovic as his teenage sister, Via.

*Wonder* is not a faith-based movie, but its message is clear: Every person is valuable. The film's focus nearly gets derailed with a pair of fights that seemingly endorse violence, but that can be fixed with a post-movie family talk.

*Wonder* is rated PG for thematic elements including bullying, and some mild language. It is based on a children's

book by the same name.

Cautions: About 5 coarse words -- OMG (3), misuse of "God" (1), misuse of "Jesus" (1). Two teens kiss, twice. We also see two fights.

**Also on DVD this month:**

Only *The Brave* (PG-13 – DVD Feb. 6, digital Jan. 23) – Based on a true story of a "hotshot" firefighting crew that lost 19 members during an out-of-control 2013 Arizona wildfire. Only *The Brave* has a solid pro-family message and a redemptive element, but tons of coarse

■ See DVD page 23

### streaming



By **Michael Foust**

Theologians give the natural world a label: It's called "general revelation." Those animals, mountains, oceans and trees shout to everyone on the planet: God exists, and He is glorious. It's not enough to save you (that comes only through special revelation – Scripture), but general revelation is enough for every person on Earth to be in awe of the Creator.

Are you still awake? Good. Because Netflix now is streaming *Planet Earth 2*, which is one of the best nature documentaries you'll ever see and one that may leave your jaw dropping at the incredible world God made. In other words, *Planet Earth 2* is general revelation on display ... in high definition.

Like its predecessor *Planet Earth* (2006), *Planet Earth 2* (2016) was filmed by BBC Nature and gives you up-close views of obscure and well-known animals doing things you didn't know were possible. It is narrated by David Attenborough, whose distinguished British accent alone makes it worth a watch.

My 9-year-old son and I are in the middle of a *Planet Earth 2* binge, and we have enjoyed every minute: Draco lizards flying through the forest air, grizzly bears tip-toeing across avalanche-prone snow, and sword-billed humming birds – who have a beak longer than their body – hunting for nectar.

There also are plenty of prey-vs.-predator scenes, so you've been warned. Racer snakes chase iguana babies in a deadly game that must be seen to be believed, and lions attempt to corner and eat a giraffe – with the latter doing a little Houdini trick to escape.

Of course, *Planet Earth 2* includes a "millions of years" framework, but that can be fixed with a parent-child discussion. (Although, to its credit, the series includes a reference to animals being "blessed," too.) Even the prey-predator scenes can spark a

Bible discussion. After all, Scripture implies (Isaiah 65:25) that animals won't eat each other in the future kingdom.

*Planet Earth 2* isn't faith-based – far from it – but it nevertheless showcases God's masterful creative skills (Psalm 8:3-4, Psalm 19:1-6).

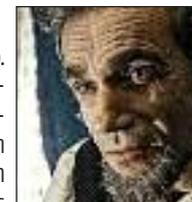
Thankfully, *Planet Earth 2* isn't the only BBC Nature documentary on Netflix. In fact, there are at least 12 of them, led by popular series *Planet Earth*, *Frozen Planet*, and *The Blue Planet*.

That's good news, because it's becoming difficult to find family-friendly content on Netflix, which spoiled my previous favorite show – *The Crown* – with sexuality and excessive language in season 2. (Although you can filter out the bad stuff with *Vi-dAngel*.)

Also streaming this month:

### Netflix

*Lincoln* (PG-13, Feb. 21) – Directed and produced by Steven Spielberg, this 2012 film spotlights Abraham Lincoln's push to pass the 13th Amendment that abolished slavery. It makes some historical blunders and includes a bit too much language, but is a fun watch for history lovers. (Its use of the f-word and its inclusion of Lincoln saying s–t is likely inaccurate.) Rated PG-13 for an intense scene of war violence, some images of carnage and brief strong language.



### Hulu

*Akeelah and the Bee* (PG, Feb. 1) – An 11-year-old girl from a rough part of Los Angeles has success in the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Writer/director Doug Atchison said his goal for the 2005 film was to show an African-American girl defying stereotypes and overcoming challenges. Rated PG for some language.

### Amazon Prime

*Logan Lucky* (PG-13, Feb. 16) – A down-on-his-luck father and a few friends decide to rob the Charlotte Motor Speedway. *Logan Lucky* (2016) is one of the funniest comedies I've seen, but it's not without its problems. It contains about 26 coarse words and a character who dresses slightly provocatively. Still, it contains no sex jokes – a rare feat in a Hollywood comedy. Rated PG-13 for language and some crude comments.

## Relax after the busy holiday season with new releases

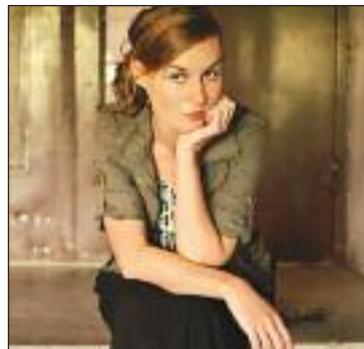
### musicscene

by **Cedric Austin**

Happy February, everyone. We made it through Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's and my birthday. It looks like we get to take a quick breather before we celebrate Valentines Day. It seems at times we can go throughout our days, weeks and months staying busy, but I would like to encourage you to take a moment to breathe. Take a moment to have God moments in your day-to-day lives. God speaks in the quiet. Make sure you can hear His voice.

### February New Releases

Elevation Collective - *Evidence* - Elevation Worship Records  
 Michael W. Smith - *A Million Lights* - Fuel Music  
 New Day Jekayln Carr - *One Nation Under God* - LMG - New Day  
 Guy Penrod - *Acoustic Hymns* -



Spring House - Capitol

Kayden Slay - *The Mercy of Jesus* - People & Songs  
 Independent Bradley Bridges - *Jesus Is King* (Single) - Independent

Zealand Worship - *Liberated* - Word Records  
 Word Charity Gayle

Charity Gayle is an emerging Christian artist, songwriter, and seasoned worship leader. Currently based in Buffalo, N.Y., working as a worship pastor and music ministry director, She has led worship for countless churches and

congregations throughout her ministry and is a regular clinician at varying worship seminars and schools. She has founded and directed several various music groups including the NY Mass Children's Gospel Choir, the New Life Center Children's Choir and Advanced Children's Choir, the NLC Young Ladies Ensemble, and others. Charity has earned a BA in Music from the University at Buffalo. Charity has just released the full album, "Lord You Are My Song." This entire album is one of my favorites. It's hard to choose which of the songs on this



■ See MUSIC page 19

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# Lift every voice and sing

## hymnhistory

### Lift Every Voice and Sing

By James Weldon Johnson

A group of young men in Jacksonville, Fla., arranged to celebrate Lincoln's birthday in 1900. My brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, and I decided to write a song to be sung at the exercises. I wrote the words and he wrote the music. Our New York publisher, Edward B. Marks, made mimeographed copies for us, and the song was taught to and sung by a chorus of 500 colored school children.

Shortly afterwards my brother and I moved away from Jacksonville to New York, and the song passed out of our minds. But the school children of Jacksonville kept singing it; they went off to other schools and sang it; they became teachers and taught it to other children. Within 20 years it was being sung over the South and in some other parts of the country.

Today the song, popularly known as the Negro National Hymn, is quite generally used.

The lines of this song repay me in an elation, almost of exquisite anguish, whenever I hear them sung by Negro children."

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise

High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.

Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,

Let us march on till victory is won.  
Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chastening rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;

Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?

We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,

We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past,  
Till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who hast by Thy might

Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,

Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand,  
True to our God,

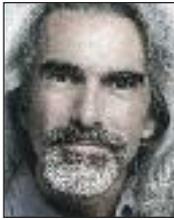
## MUSIC

continued from page 18

album are my favorites, but I will list a few. The album begins with "Amen" which is a ballad reminding us of the strength of our God. A few others, "Lord, You Are My Song" which is the title cut, Psalm 100 and "Divine Exchange." Charity then takes you right to the throne room with "Cleansed", "Nothing but the Blood" and "Look What The Lord Has Done." I encourage you to not just take my word for it. Go get this album now. You will not regret it. Charity's music can be purchased on all digital media outlets.

### Guy Penrod

By appearance alone, Guy has a signature look that is recognized around the world. From hair to height, belt buckle to boots, piercing eyes to engaging grin, Guy is a presence that is easily recognized. Beyond that, there is substance behind the style, because Penrod's authenticity causes people to listen to what he has to say. Guy's rasp-tinged country style vocals and experience on stage over the years, have given him the ability to be relaxed and confident in every setting. He has a stage presence that few can pull off. In addition, the music industry reflects Guy's popularity. His DVD release, The Best of Guy Penrod, was certified platinum by the RIAA, a claim few can match in any genre. The Best of Guy Penrod highlights some of Guy's mu-



sical history while escorting the viewer into the home and farm of Guy, Angie and their children. Living the country life and being a family man (father to seven sons and one daughter) are a significant part of the personality that is Guy Penrod. "Blessed Assurance" is the brand-new release from Guy. Guy chose these hymns because of their power to touch and renew your soul. This album reflects his signature personality while spotlighting Guy's unmistakable rich tones and country-influenced style that graced stages and attracted audiences from The Grand Ole Opry and The Sydney

Opera House to Carnegie Hall. These fresh arrangements invite listeners to sing along to timeless lyrics of eternal truth and hope. "Classics" features some of his most requested hits from his 14-yr tenure as lead singer with the renowned Gaither Vocal Band, where he became internationally known for his powerhouse vocals and broad singing range. Produced by Penrod, the new collection contains "The Baptism of Jesse Taylor," "The Old Rugged Cross Made the Difference," "Yes I know," "Then Came the Morning," "Because He Lives" and more.



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# The past shaping the future...even in love

by **Jeanette Gardner Littleton**

Books with a romance plot in the hearts of them are consistent favorites among readers. Heart of America Christian Writers Network (HACWN) member Catherine Brakefield has had some short, personal-experience stories printed, but her real love is writing romances. She came to a HACWN conference with a dream in her heart and talked to a publisher about her ideas. That publisher ended up accepting her work, and now Catherine's living her dream. Since February is the month of love, we wanted to ask her about her books, which also point readers to God's love.

**Tell us about your books.**

I never I thought I'd ever write historical romance. My g r a n d - m o t h e r gave me the inspiration, and now, I have two historical romances, *Wilted Dandelions* and *Swept into Destiny*. The next, *Into Destiny's Whirlwind*, is scheduled to release April 17.

**Can you give us a little taste of each?**

*Wilted Dandelions* takes place during the Second Great Awakening in 1837. Rachael Rothburn, a high-spirited woman who feels she doesn't need a husband, wants to become a missionary in the American West and enters a marriage of convenience to be represented by the missionary alliance. In the process of co-existing, she and her faux-husband discover God doesn't create coincidences—He designs possibilities.

*Swept into Destiny* is the first book of a four-book series and takes place in Maryville, Tennessee, during the antebellum era. Maggie Gatlan is secretly educating slaves when she meets Ben McConnell, an Irish immigrant. An unexpected chain of events leads her into choosing where her loyalties lie: conscience and consequence—does she care more for Ben or for her beloved South?

*Into Destiny's Whirlwind*, the second book of the *Destiny* series, begins in March 1898 in Emerald, Kentucky, just before the Spanish-American War erupts. Collina McConnell is trying to get home to her family when her wagon becomes stuck and a dashing Rough Rider offers his help. Set in the Gibson Era, this spellbinding novel of love and hate tells an unforgettable story of the Old South.

**Why did you decide to write historical romance?**

The only subject in school I enjoyed was history. I would devour American history books. I even wrote two pictorial history books for Arcadia Publishing while writing for a local newspaper in Lapeer, Michigan, *Images of America, The Lapeer Area*, and *Images of America Eastern Lapeer County*. However, as you know, true stories oftentimes end unhappily, and I am a sucker for a happy ending.

**Why did you choose romance as your writing style?**

The thought of writing a good romance was always in the back of my mind. After all, God is the inventor of romance and, as you can see with Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Ruth

and Boaz. God loves a good romance, and love just naturally follows behind! Ahh, a happy ending.

**You mentioned your grandmother first gave you the inspiration to write?**

Through the twelve years my grandmother lived with my family and me, I came to learn by watching her how to survive the challenges of life's trials. Looking back now, she has become my role model throughout the trying years of the publishing race. Patience, perseverance, and tenacity are not just words. To me they mean conditioning for an endurance race, a race of survival. I didn't realize I was learning this until years afterwards, until my grandmother went to live with Jesus.

**What is the most unexpected thing about the process of writing romances?**

Learning that writing it is a team effort. Writing consists of research and editing. A writer needs a good agent backing her and a fantastic editor and publisher to make sure the writer's work shines. For your survival kit, you will need plenty of patience, perseverance, and prayer to be among the winners of this publishing world.

**What do you hope your readers get out of reading your novels?**

Most important thing I hope my readers take from my novels is the truth about the people throughout history who made this nation what it has become. One nation under God. Indivisible. The greatest nation on the earth today.

Why is it the greatest? Because we serve a great God. If my readers get any more than this from my novels, they would have gotten the essence of our loving God toward a stumbling, underserving nation. The love a good God bestowed upon an imperfect people like the McConnells in the *Destiny* series, imperfect survivors each and every one of them, sinners, but willing to repent. Life may knock them down, but they never quit.

I hope to show my readers to their all-star destination through my characters' ordeals, trials, and highs and lows, and help them hear in the wee regions of their heart their Lord and Savior saying, "Well done good and faithful servant."

Jeanette Gardner Littleton is co-director of Heart of America Christian Writers Network ([www.HACWN.org](http://www.HACWN.org)). The next HACWN conference is Oct. 18-20, 2018.



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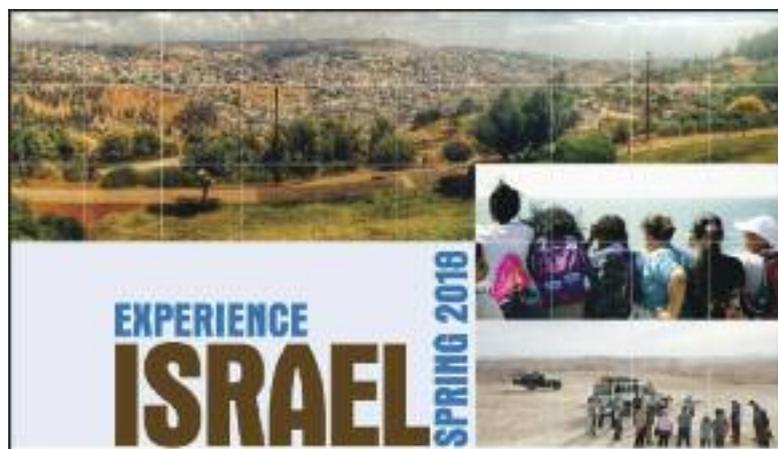
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Jeanette Gardner Littleton is co-director of Heart of America Christian Writers Network.

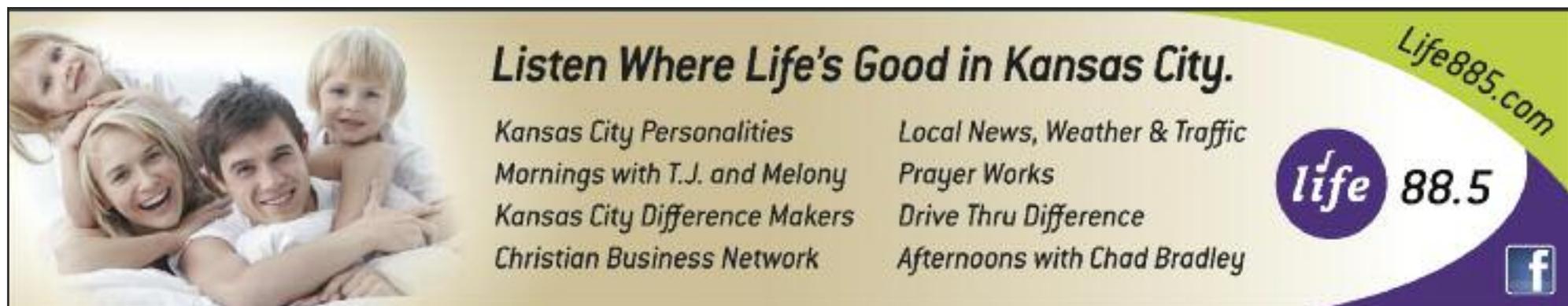
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# 50+ Lifestyles

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## healthy living



### How is that January resolution coming?

By Larry Lewis

A fitness program is one of the best things you can do to lose weight, but it is also essential for good health.

The biggest problem isn't normally getting started on a fitness program but sticking to it. You have to make a commitment to your fitness program every day, making it one of your priorities.

It's not as hard or complicated as most people make out. When most people think about losing weight through exercise, they think of taking their body to breaking point and the agony of the after-effects, but it doesn't have to be like that.

Here are some tips:

- You lose fat by burning off more calories than you eat. So to burn off the calories you need to do at least 30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise every day.

- Doing the right type of workout you can also elevate your metabolic rate so that your body burns off more calories for the next 23 hours of the day too! This is called the fat after-burner effect.

- The right type of exercise consti-

■ See **FITNESS** page 23

### STAYING MENTALLY ACTIVE

1. Watch your carbs: Processed or rapidly digested carbs (like white flour, white rice, sugar and packaged foods like crackers, cookies and chips) increase the risk of coronary heart disease, according to the Harvard Nurses Study, which followed almost 120,000 female nurses for eight years. When you go low-carb, you control carb intake.

By eliminating added sugar and focusing on whole foods, including foundation vegetables, as your core carbohydrates, you are eliminating those processed carbs that put you at risk for heart disease. As you transition to ongoing weight loss, and later pre-maintenance and lifetime maintenance, you gradually reintroduce more carbohydrates. This process allows you to customize the program to your own personal tolerance for carbs.

2. Eat breakfast: Studies also show that people who eat breakfast are more successful at losing weight (and keeping it off) than those who don't eat breakfast. Start off the day with a couple eggs scrambled with diced tomatoes, sliced avocado, shredded cheddar cheese and a little salsa. Check out our Recipes section for even more delicious low-carb breakfast ideas.



## Help your loved one with loneliness

### thecaregiver

Winter is a lonely time for older adults. Sometimes an older adult lacks a network of family and friends; other times he or she may withdraw into isolation as a result of health conditions, depression or mental illness. Physical limitations such as a fear of falling can keep an older adult isolated in her home, as can fatigue, chronic pain or shame over memory problems. Here are several facts about loneliness

#### Fact: Loneliness Harms Your Brain

Interesting new research is showing that loneliness may speed the onset of dementia. Research found that 13 percent who reported feeling lonely developed dementia over three years, as compared with 6 percent with strong social support.

#### Fact: Loneliness Harms Your Heart

There's a link between loneliness and fatal heart disease. A Harvard study of 44,000 people with heart disease found that 8 percent of patients who lived alone died after four years, compared with 5.7 of those who lived with a spouse or others.

#### Fact: Loneliness Kills

A Brigham Young University study of more than 300,000 people and found that loneliness was as strong a marker for early death as alcoholism and heavy (more than 15 cigarettes a day) smoking.

#### 4 Ways to Protect Your Older Loved Ones from Loneliness

1. Help your loved one become more social-media savvy. As younger folks know all too well, you don't need to leave your house to catch up with friends, follow current events and find out about events in your area. Email and news sites are one way to do this, of course, but using a social media site like Facebook makes it even easier for an



older adult to feel connected, simply by being able to see what others are posting.

2. Encourage your loved one not to live alone. It's common for older adults to want to "age in place" in their own homes, and you may hear strong opinions on this topic from your parents and older loved ones. But this may not be such a good idea, experts say; studies show that those who live alone are

prone to a host of health issues compared with those who are married or living in a group living situation.

3. Set up transportation options. Ask anyone who works with older adults living on their own: One of the biggest factors behind isolation is lack of transportation. Many older adults no longer drive, or they fear driving at night or on unfamiliar routes. Call your local Area Agency on Aging and get a list of all the transportation resources in your loved one's area.

4. Help your loved one find support groups. When older adults with health problems find support from others with the same condition, it helps with loneliness and depression. They may also get valuable information and motivation to seek help for their health condition.

— By Melanie Haiken

Melanie writes for WebMD, and the Blue Cross/Blue Shield websites.

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# opinion

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## Great memories prepare us for what's next



**DWIGHT WIDAMAN**

Editor, Metro Voice Newspaper

### mythoughts

In my June 1991 column for *Kansas City Christian* (now *Metro Voice*), I wrote this about the support of the community for a Christian newspaper:

"Now that I have become the editor and publisher of the KCC, it is my sincerest prayer and deepest hope that I will continue to find that renewed commitment in the Christian community to seeing this paper grow and prosper. That commitment is expressed in three ways..."

I went on to ask that:

- 1) People would pray for God's guidance and his blessings;
- 2) People support the paper financially through subscriptions and distribution at churches; and
- 3) People would shop at the businesses that support the paper through their advertising.

In the months following, I asked for the prayers of the readers we served. Now, almost 30 years later, as the paper ends its print run and transitions into a weekly—even daily—online newspaper, each of those things is still important for continued success.

Many things have changed since 1990 when the paper first launched, but many things have not. Looking at the first issue I edited, I noticed the following headlines: "Judge rules that life begins at conception"; "Hoaxes find millions of takers in Christians"; "Libya: country of oppression and fear"; "Church of Scientology accused of blackmailing actor"; and "Mounting world needs causing compassion fatigue".

Sound familiar?

While many of the issues could easily be headlines today, one thing certainly has not changed — our gratitude to you, our reader, for making this newspaper possible through your support ex-



pressed in the areas above.

Preparing for this issue required diving into old boxes filled with black-and-white photos, dusty copies of the paper and old scrapbooks. Seeing the names of the many, many people who have served us in some capacity brought a ground swell of emotion. It was an emotional time for us already, because my 92-year-old mom had just passed away the previous week. Looking back brought many smiles to our faces, thinking of the wonderful people we have been blessed to work with.

Ruthellen Norman not only helped with my delivery in the early years but also gave me a light oak Danish desk in 1991 that is still use today.

Bob Baldwin lent me the use of his computers and printer in my first year because I could not afford them on my own. I worked from his Lakewood Business Park office in the evenings and would often leave as people were arriving to work the next morning.

Oran Hopkins, owner of D&O Distributing, donated all the postage and handling for subscriptions in the 90s. I enjoyed visiting his office in the caves.

We had many faithful volunteer delivery drivers. Ron and Veronica Frierdich delivered Johnson County,

Kan., for 15 years. Bertha Sievers, in addition to editing our calendar in the early years, also delivered to churches and businesses north of the river. She was followed by the Chapman family and now, the VanDynes.

Delivering the papers to churches, ministries and businesses was one of the most crucial duties. Throughout the years, both Anita and I have kept our own routes. It allowed us to stay in touch and see how the paper was perceived and being used. We will miss the many church secretaries and pastors whom have become friends during our brief monthly encounters.

Of course, you cannot have a newspaper without good articles! In the early years, our core group included Christopher T. Murphy, Gary and Connie Blunt and others. Of the five editors we've had since 1991, four have been women and two of those minorities. We were way ahead of the secular media in terms of equality.

Alan Goforth has faithfully written and proofread the last 10 years. I first met Alan after our daughters became friends in kindergarten.

Joe and Stephanie Boothe have designed the layout for over a decade. Giving up a weekend each month, they made sure the paper was colorful and easy to read. I never did switch over to InDesign from Quark. Sorry, Joe.

And then there are our friends who have shared our frustrations, hopes and fears and always joined us in prayer over the years. Penny and Steve Sage, the late Rita North, Paul and Karen Miller, Bill and Elaine Mayor, Kent and Pam Anderson, Amy Fox, Jim and Katie Myers, Don and Cindy Hilker, Tom and Cindy Jones, Jim and Lisa Seley and many others.

Lastly, we want to thank our two daughters Hannah and Emma. They



With the June 1990 issue—the first with Dwight as owner.

## THANK YOU!

Here are just some of the many people who have made it possible.

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■ See MEMORIES on page 23

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Mason Potter  
Henry Thomas Imler  
Jim and Sharon Moore  
Jim and Lisa Seley & family  
Kent and Pam Anderson & Family

**MEMORIES**

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have never known any life other than mom and dad on "press week". I remember them cuddled into sleeping bags in the hallway of our Lee's Summit offices when they were little and we were pulling all-nighters.

They would also accompany us on our delivery routes.

One special memory is having Emma along with me when she was just 5 or 6 years old. We had picked up our donated monthly delivery van at City Rent-a-Truck off the Plaza and were driving down 47th Street. The topic of grandpas came up and she asked why she didn't have them. I explained that both her grandpas had died and gone to Heaven long before she was born. She said she wanted to go to heaven someday and see them and I explained that was possible if you knew Jesus.

As we drove, I was blessed to share the salvation message with her. Sitting in her booster seat, she listened intently. Nearing UMKC, I pulled over to a side street and stopped.

"Do you understand?" I asked. She eagerly shook her head yes.

Emma and I prayed the sinner's prayer and she accepted Christ as her personal savior.

In the summer of 2015, Anita and I had the great opportunity to take our daughters to Israel. What they both experienced touched their hearts deeply. Returning to college that fall, Hannah witnessed anti-Semitism on campus. Because of her experience in Israel, and having met and spent time with Israeli Jews, she was able to connect her heart AND her mind and was ready with a response when bigotry reared its ugly head on her campus.

Would both of those instances with our daughters have happened eventually without having grown up in a Christian newspaper family? Possibly. But we do know that there are experiences derived specifically in instances created by us publishing the newspaper.

For that we are blessed.

**DVDS**

continued from page 18

language (I counted 70 words). Rated PG-13 for thematic content, some sexual references, language and drug material.

Same Kind of Different As Me (PG-13 – DVD Feb. 20, digital Feb. 6) – An art dealer gets a new perspective on life and family when he befriends a homeless man. Based on a New York Times bestseller of the same name, this one spotlights forgiveness in a way that may surprise you. It also puts Romans 8:28 and its implications on display. Recommended for teens and adults. Rated PG-13 for thematic elements including some violence and language (one misuse of h—l and four instances of the n-word).

The Star (PG – DVD Feb. 20, digital Feb. 6) – A first-century donkey, dove and sheep accompany Mary and Joseph on their journey to Bethlehem. Recommended for the entire family. Rated PG for some thematic

elements.

Steve McQueen, American Icon (Unrated – DVD Feb. 20, digital Feb. 6) – He starred in more than 30 films and 20 TV series during the 1950s, '60s and '70s and was the highest-paid actor in Hollywood. But toward the end of his life – sensing a void – he found Christ, as we learn in this documentary. Recommended for older children, teens and the entire family. No language or sexuality. Minimal violence.

Coco (PG -- DVD Feb. 27, digital Feb. 13) – The latest Pixar film is colorful, funny... and full of theological problems. It's based on Día de los Muertos ("Day of the Dead"), a Mexican holiday in which families build shrines within their home to deceased ancestors so as to commune with and remember their relatives. Yes, those dead relatives come to life in Coco. Rated PG for thematic elements.

–Film reviewer Michael Foust is the husband of an amazing wife and the father of four small children.

**FITNESS**

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tutes cardiovascular exercise that elevates your heart rate to 70%-85% of your maximum for at least 20 minutes with a 5 minute warm up and 5 minute cool down.

So my suggestion is aim to do six 30 minute high intensity cardiovascular workouts every single day and then take one rest day this is the type of fitness program to lose weight that you need to do.

• I find it best to work out heavily in the morning and it gets me pumped for the whole day.

• It's not just cardiovascular exercise that is important, weight training is just as important in my opinion in the pursuit of losing weight. Weight training burns off calories too but more importantly it helps increase your muscle mass which increases your basic metabolic rate so you burn off more calories 24hrs a day.

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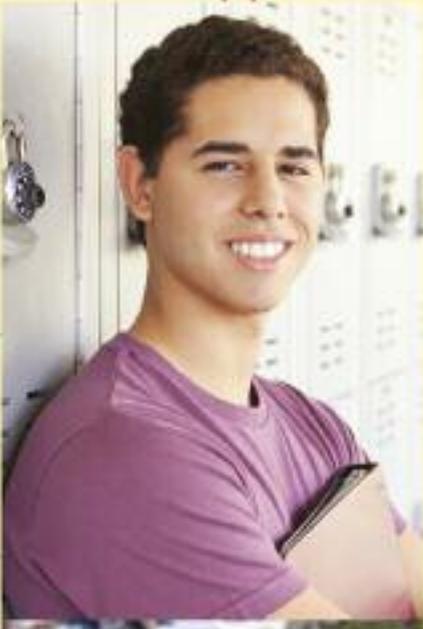
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