

METRO VOICE HONORED



Metro Voice received two distinctions at the Evangelical Press Association's (EPA) annual international convention this spring. MV was named the top newspaper by the Association of Christian Newspapers—the independent newspaper division of EPA. The paper also received second place in the Award of Excellence category among all newspapers in a category that included the large official publications of various denominations, both in and outside of the U.S.

Honored were Publishers Dwight and Anita Widaman and art director Joe Boothe.

EPA is the professional membership organization for Christian periodicals in North America and around the world. The 300-member association includes such notable publications and organizations as Christianity Today, World Vision, Focus on the Family, Decision magazine, Compassion, and The Salvation Army.

Back To School

In the Midwest, August is synonymous with the beginning of school. Familiar yellow buses will soon roll down the streets. Christian school parents will once again line up to drop their kids off at the school doorstep. Are there practical tips to get your family off to a great start? Yes, and you'll find them in this month's "Back-to-School" feature on page 5.



Never too old to learn. Distance Learning Guide | page 8

New life for old churches

Congregations strengthen neighborhoods by opening – not closing – doors

by Mark Clifton

Legacy church planting isn't limited to churches at the very end of their lives.

Many churches find themselves with buildings far larger than they need even as they struggle to impact their immediate community in a meaningful way.

They love Jesus and the Gospel. They love lost people, but they can't seem to crack the missional code of the people who live

"One of the single greatest challenges for these new churches is finding a location in which to meet and from which to conduct ministry."

■ See NEIGHBORHOODS page 23

Is the Church in trouble?

Silence is not an option for Christians

by Alex Murashko

Current events in the last several weeks have been dramatic enough for some Christian leaders to warn that a course correction for the church is needed.

But are enough pastors and influencers in the community of believers speaking publicly about this apparent accelerated ride toward the irrelevance of Christians in America?

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez is speaking in truth and not holding back. Rodriguez, someone CNN and Fox named the leader of the Hispanic evangelical movement, lives to "advance the Lamb's agenda" and warn about the country's move away from morality.

"To engage a biblical narrative as a metaphor, as Christians, as it pertains to cultural acceptance and governmental affirmation, we no longer live in Jerusalem; we now live in Babylon," Rodriguez ex-

plains. "We live in the midst of opposition and hostility. We live in the midst of threats and persecution."

While his sermon as a guest speaker at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., is primarily evangelistic, he has been traveling around the country to share how silence is not an option for Christians. He further explained how "today's complacency is tomorrow's captivity."

"As a nation we have never been under the canopy of darkness that we presently find ourselves. In the past six weeks it has been almost surreal," Rodriguez said. "It goes beyond [the Supreme Court]. Yes, SCOTUS redefining marriage; yes, the subsequent attacks on religious liberty; yes, Planned Parenthood and the video of selling of baby parts, you name it; it's almost surreal."

"It's eerie and apocalyptic. ... It's to the point where people don't want to turn on the television set if you're a Christ fol-



Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, tells Christians at the Empowered21 Global Congress to stand up for their faith.

lower... We can't be silent about issues that impact Christendom. ... We need to speak truth with love."

If a state of Babylon is not evident now for some, it will be in a matter of just a year or two, according to Rodriguez.

"The church will become a marginalized religious threat in America — irrelevant, no longer prophetic. And we will be satisfied having gatherings in a self-preservation society sort of modus operandi and

■ See RODRIGUEZ page 22

Healthy Families asks community for help

Jackson County has more than 1,900 children in foster care. Although many children have found homes with relatives, others are in need of foster families. Unfortunately, the demand for foster homes is quickly exceeding the supply.

In order to meet the demand, Healthy Families Programs, an agency within Cornerstones of Care, is asking the community to consider becoming foster parents.

"Our goals are simple," said Shelia Rancatore, director of Healthy Families. "Keep children in their home community so they can maintain connections; keep siblings together; and have a variety of homes available to meet the diverse needs of the children in care. To attain those goals, we need to increase the number of foster homes."

Children in foster care have suffered from abuse and neglect. According to the Department of Health and Human Services' Child Maltreatment report from 2012, within the U.S., 78.3 percent of victims were neglected; 18.3 percent were physically abused, 9.3 percent were sexually abused, and 8.5 percent were psychologically maltreated.

"Needless to say," commented Rancatore, "children

who have experienced this kind of treatment need safe, stable, and nurturing homes."

The ages of children in foster care range from infancy to 21. In Northwest Missouri, the age group with the highest population is 15 years and older, which comprises approximately 25 percent of the children in care. Unfortunately, that same age group has the fewest options of foster homes.

"Finding homes for older children is one of Healthy Families' greatest challenges," said Rancatore.

Healthy Families works hand in hand with the Missouri Children's Division to train and license foster parents in Jackson County, as well as the 29 other counties of Northwest Missouri.

The families with which they work have varied backgrounds and experiences; however, they all share

a willingness to commit and a desire to make a difference in a child's life.

You can learn more about the foster parenting program at www.healthyfamilies4kids.org/Licensing. To start the foster parenting process or speak to one of the Healthy Families staff, call (855) SRV-KIDS (855-778-5437).



Hope Faith Ministries announces two new director appointments

Hope Faith Ministries has appointed Brian Blevins as Executive Director and Katie Eck as Development Director.

Blevins joins comes from the Lawrence Community Shelter in Lawrence, Kan., where he was executive director. Eck joins comes from Liberty United Methodist Church where she was the church administrator/director of operations.

Hope Faith meets the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of homeless and impoverished men, women and children in Kansas City.

"I'm extremely excited to be a part of the vision of Hope Faith Ministries," said Blevins. "I truly believe that God has called me at this time and that through God's leading, we will continue to provide our community with the highest quality of service to those in need."

"Hope Faith's programs are amazing and continue to expand to meet the desperate needs of those in our city who are homeless or living in poverty," said Eck.

Visit www.hopefaithministries.org



Blevins



Eck

newsbriefs

Government could use tattoos to track people

The government is working on ways to identify people by their tattoos.

The National Institute for Standards and Technology hosted a challenge for groups to come up with the most accurate software and algorithms for identifying tattoos.

A computer scientist told the Washington Post the main reason the government wants the IDs to track down criminals.

But Alvaro Bedoya, executive director of Georgetown



Law's Center on Privacy & Technology, questions whether the law has caught up with how image recognition with tattoos could be used.

"People are being identified remotely without their knowledge - and right now the Fourth Amendment doesn't really say anything about that," Bedoya said.

Missouri Sex Ed to battle Predators and Sexting

Missouri's public and charter schools that teach sexual education must now include information about sexting, sexual predators and online predators. The addition was signed into law last week by Governor Jay Nixon.

The bill's sponsor, St. Louis representative Genise Montecillo, hopes such education will make children safer from predators on the internet and cell phones.

"It's just a huge door that's been opened for them to get to our children in a much easier way, so hopefully we can get kids to understand that there is a risk," Montecillo told Missouri.net.

Missouri KidsFirst Deputy Director Emily van Schenkhoof says

such education could avert many abuses.

"Kids that have been kind of struggling to find community and connection, they go online looking for entertainment and looking for friendship, and these kids are vulnerable," said van Schenkhoof. "They simply don't have the capacity at that point, both the emotional maturity and the knowledge, about how you talk to people safely online."

The bill received broad support from both republicans and democrats.

"This was an issue that there's not a lot of disagreement. We want to protect our kids from pedophiles," said Montecillo.

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Operation Christmas Child vision trip to Tanzania

by Joe Christian | OCC

I had the amazing privilege of leading a team of Operation Christmas Child volunteers on a Vision Trip to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in May. We experienced five outreaches where shoebox gifts were distributed to children and observed children being disciplined with “The Greatest Journey” discipleship program.

I saw the power of a simple gift in action. These shoebox gift donations are strengthening the church in Tanzania. The pastors were so humble and appreciative of the generosity of the churches and ministry partners, like many Kansas City area Christians, who pack and mobilize shoeboxes filled with love and prayer.

Pastor Israel has planted 19 churches.



When the team went to pray for him and give him a gift from Samaritan's Purse for his ministry to children, he dropped to his knees for us to pray for him. We participated in a shoebox outreach at the church he pastors. His church invited children from their neighborhood and schools. Over 40 percent of the families in the neighborhoods surrounding the church are Muslim. Shoebox gifts open doors for many who would not listen to the Gospel to come and listen. Because of your generosity, hearts are open to learn the good

news of Jesus!

U.S. Pastors who love to see the local, indigenous church thrive should rejoice in partnering with Operation Christmas Child to mobilize shoeboxes, because so much fruit is resulting from your partnership. Churches are being planted using shoebox distributions. Churches use “The Greatest Journey” discipleship course provided by Samaritan's Purse through generous donors like you. The children come back every week for 12 weeks and given a Biblical foundation in walking with God and reaching out to their friends and loved one with the Good News!

Many of the churches that Operation Christmas Child partner with in other nations do not have resources for children's ministry like we have here in the U.S. Pastor Nathan Ntungu (in the middle above) planted Wazo Assemblies of God Church



33 years ago in the African bush. Dar es Salaam has grown to a city of over 7 million people and neighborhoods have grown up all around the church. This local church did outreach to schools and neighborhoods inviting children to come and receive good news and great joy. As with other churches in Tanzania, there are many Muslim and unchurched families living in these neighborhoods. This fiery pastor is still declaring God's power to the next generation (Psalms 71:17,18) and was very humble and extremely appreciative of shoebox gifts packed with love.

David came and found me after the shoebox outreach and put his hand out to me and in a very honoring and formal fashion said, “Thank you!” and smiled. I was deeply touched by the children's expression of gratitude.

I had the joy of spending a few minutes with this precious little one who received a pair of shoes that fit perfectly.



She is intently looking over all of the wonderful gifts she received. Carla Boyd, an OCC volunteer from southern, Illinois is directly behind us spending time celebrating the contents of a shoebox with a little girl.

Jesus loves the little children of the world! This little guy was precious and when I put my thumb up to see how he was doing, he put his thumb back up to me!



more information

National Collection Week is November 16-23, 2015. Learn how to get more involved with Operation Christmas Child: www.samaritanspurse.org

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KCK Mayor Compares Support of Religious Freedom to Confederate Flag

by Dwight Widaman

The mayor of Kansas City, Kan., in July attacked Christians who support religious freedom as the “Confederate flag of religious bigotry.”



Mayor Mark Holland, speaking at the National Council of La Raza's convention, brought up the Supreme Court's recent ruling that struck down the laws of 33 states which banned same-sex marriage.

“But we cannot let our guard down. This religious freedom component, I believe is the Confederate flag of religious bigotry, being flown long after the fact,” Holland said.

“As an ordained United Methodist pastor myself, I'm offended to note, when they say Christians are offended by the ruling. In fact, many of us Christians celebrate the ruling and the continued welcome and recognition of all people.

Holland, in applauding the court ruling, said KCK had thrown open its arms to the LGBT community. Kansas City, Kan. is one of the state's strongest Democrat strongholds while Kansas as a whole remains primarily Republican. Yet he described Democrats as “another persecuted group.”

“The Democrats still have a foothold in Kansas City and we're very proud of that,” said the Democrat mayor. “And because Democrats are in Wyandotte County, we welcome our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters and celebrate their life and their love, and always will.”

Nation's children are still suffering from poverty

by Dwight Widaman

Despite the “official” unemployment rate dropping across the nation, including Kansas and Missouri, the nation's children do not seem to have benefited from what the government officials tell us are good times. And black children are now fairing worse than children that live on Indian reservations.

According to the latest figures a higher percentage of children live in poverty now than did during the Great Recession, states a new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation released in July.

About 22% of children in the U.S. lived below the poverty line in 2013, compared with 18% in 2008 before President Bush left office, the foundation's 2015 Kids Count Data Book reported. In 2013, the U.S. Department of Human and Health Service's official poverty line was \$23,624 for a family with two adults and two children.

Kansas ranks number 9 in well-being while Missouri ranks 24. As for poverty rates for children, Kansas stands at 19 percent and Missouri at 22 percent.

“The fact that it's happening is disturbing on lots of levels,” said Laura Speer, the associate director for policy reform and advocacy at the Casey Foundation, a non-profit based in Baltimore.

“Those kids often don't have the access to the things they need to thrive.” The foundation says its mission is to help low-income children in the U.S. by providing grants and advocating for policies that promote economic opportunity.

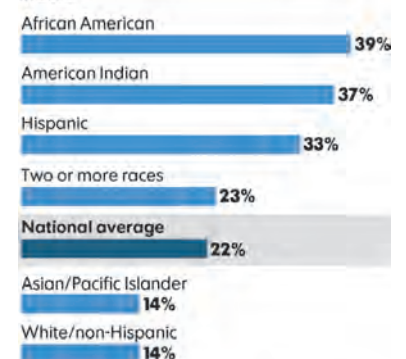
The report examined data from several federal agencies ranging from 2008 to 2013 to assess state-by-state trends of 16 factors of children's well-being, including economics, education, health and family and community. It found that one in four children — a total of 18.7 million kids — lived in low-income households in 2013; low-income families were defined as those who use more than 30% of their pre-tax income for housing.

However, the numbers are from 2013, and Speer said the outcome may be different now that the unemployment rate has lowered to 5.3%.

But the official numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics have been accused

U.S. CHILDREN IN POVERTY

Percentage of U.S. children, by race, whose families were living below the poverty line¹ in 2013:



¹ U.S. poverty line in 2013 was an annual income of \$23,624 for a family of two adults and two children.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey.
George Fierbas, USA TODAY

USA TODAY

by leading economists as being misleading. Under the Obama administration, individuals who have stopped looking for employment, but still remain jobless, are not considered unemployed. They are considered “out of the job market.” This year, a record number of Americans are

■ See POVERTY page 22

Confronting BDS: Israeli Christians and Illinois

JERUSALEM -- The biblical accounts of the angel Gabriel portray him as a messenger imparting God's plans, first to the prophet Daniel and later to the priest Zechariah and his long-awaited offspring, John the Baptist.

Like his biblical namesake, Father Gabriel Nadaf, an Arabic-speaking Greek Orthodox priest from Nazareth, the town where Jesus spent his childhood, has made it his life's work to help Christians better understand his homeland, the Jewish State of Israel.

The Christian Empowerment Council in Israel published a new guideline this month to help Christians respond to the "Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions" movement (BDS) against Israel.

Entitled "Test the Spirits: A Christian Guide to the Anti-Israel Boycott Movement," the 12-page pamphlet, can be downloaded as a PDF file from CEC's website.

Father Nadaf serves as the organization's spiritual leader.

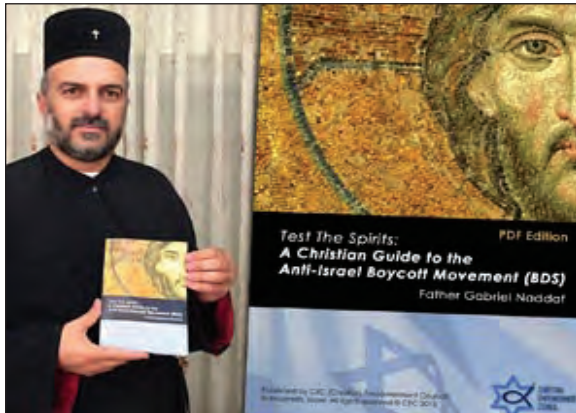
"As the spiritual leader of the Christian Empowerment Council here in Israel, it is my responsibility to encourage Christians around the world to think about Israel in biblical and moral ways," Father Nadaf writes in the introduction.

He encourages Christians to consider their personal views toward Israel, asking that God guide them "in great wisdom."

According to its website, CEC has made headlines internationally "for its pioneering work integrating Israel's Christian community into the wider Israeli society and supporting and guiding young Christians in the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]."

In 2013, Father Nadaf's 17-year-old son was brutally beaten by a 21-year-old affiliated with the anti-Israel Hadash Party near his home in Nazareth. At the time, his father said their goal was "to intimidate me and my family."

In addition to its work in Israel, CEC also monitors Christian denominations abroad, such as the Episcopal and Mennonite churches and the United Church of Christ that have adopted



BDS.

"There is much confusion in the global church about Israel, and God is not the author of confusion," Father Nadaf writes in the introduction.

"Rather, God wants us to seek after his heart, to get wisdom and to get understanding. God does not want his church to be ignorant about such an important topic as Israel; yet, there are many in the church today sowing confusion, spreading hatred of the Jewish state," he writes.

Meanwhile in America last month, Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner made history signing an anti-BDS law, the first state to pass such legislation.

In the press release, the governor said "We need to stand up to anti-Semitism whenever and wherever we see it."

"This historic legislation is an important first step in the fight against boycotts of Israel, and I hope other states move quickly to follow our lead," Gov. Rauner said.

Info: <http://eldarinn.com/CEC/>

newsbriefs

UN Passes pro-family resolution without US

(WNS)--The United Nations Human Rights Council passed a resolution in support of the traditional family in early July. The vote--29 in support and 14 against, with four abstentions--split the council along clear lines, with a group of mostly poorer developing nations across Asia, Africa, and South America defeating the United States, all the European nations, and a few other developed countries who, amazingly, opposed the resolution. The resolution reaffirms the family as the natural and fundamental unit of society and urges member states to take action to support and strengthen families. It notes that the "contribution of the family in society and in the achievement of development goals continues to be largely overlooked and underemphasized." The resolution encourages countries to set pro-family policies that support family functions such as caring for the elderly and balancing work



and parental responsibilities. China, India, Kenya, Algeria, and Vietnam also voted for the resolution. Supporters heralded the document as a "monumental development for the pro-family movement," said Rebecca Oas of the Center for Family and Human Rights (C-FAM).

Senate Helps Adoption

(WNS)--The U.S. Senate approved legislation to relieve some of the financial burden of adopting children. The Adoptive Families Relief Act allows the State Department to waive visa renewal fees for children who have been adopted by American families but whose entry into the U.S. is delayed. Without relief from the new legislation, families must renew their U.S. visas every six months, a process that can cost up to \$550 each time. "Families who step up to provide a safe, stable, and loving home for children struggling overseas are a source of inspiration and hope, here and abroad," said Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa. "Unfortunately, too often, these families encounter challenges beyond their control when bringing their child home."

A FORMER SATANIC HIGH PRIEST AND WARLOCK WHO IS NOW SAVED AND SERVES AS A CHRISTIAN EVANGELIST WILL BE MINISTERING IN A

3 DAY CONVENTION

Evangelist John Ramirez



John was mentored personally by David Wilkerson for 3 years. An author and speaker, John was raised in an impoverished Bronx Ghetto and grew up hating his dad because of his disregard of his family. John eventually found acceptance in new "family" of witches, and warlocks. For 25 years he served his then master Satan with total devotion. He became a follower of Santeria, and Palo Mayombe, a Palero high priest Tata and warlock. He plunged deeply into the occult and was taught how to hate and cast spells even over regions.

God then saved him and called him into the ministry. John is now traveling over America and internationally preaching the Gospel. John has appeared on many TV networks such as the 700 Club, TBN, Church Channel, and Word Channel.

He has written several books including "Out of the Devil's Caldron" and "Unmasking the Devil". His books, DVDs and CDs will be available at the convention.

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Back 2 School

The Kansas City region is blessed with some of the best schools in both Missouri and Kansas. So why Christian education? If you are struggling with this question, congratulations. A majority of parents don't even consider any options besides public education. When parents ask this question, it means they are taking seriously their role and authority in their children's education.

God ordained the institution of the family. Parents are called by God to teach and train their children. School, any school, is only allowed to teach a child because the parents delegate their God-given authority to the school. It is important, then, that the parents agree with the goals and objectives that the school has for educating their children. Parents will stand before God for what they allowed their children to be taught.

In Galatians 6:7-8, the apostle Paul states, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

We can think of the heart and mind of every child as being a garden. What is being sown into the heart and mind of your child?

In a Christian school, the truth is being sown

"To tell the truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God."

With one's hand on the Word of God, a witness in a court of law will profess to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. In the Christian school, the whole truth is told.

In this age of relativism, truth is what-

Is Christian Education Really Important?



ever you want to make it. But as Christians, we know the truth, Jesus. We understand that there is an anchor for all of life's decisions. Our course is set. We have a sure rock to stand on. We want our children to have this anchor and sure rock. We want our children to know the Truth.

In a Christian school, the Word of God is the standard for truth. The teachers can be sure they are teaching the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The students can learn to evaluate what is truth according to God's Word. They are taught each subject according to a Christian worldview.

In science, your child will learn he is not the product of an evolved ape. He is not a cosmic accident that has no future beyond this world. He will learn the truth. Seeds of truth will be sown - that he is a child of God, created in God's image with a special God-given purpose for his life.

In history, your child will learn that all time is orchestrated by God. Seeds will be sown that it is God who puts kings in their place and sets them down. It is God that has the answers to social and economic problems. It is God who sets the standards for society.

In math, students will see that it is the infinite mind of God that put the universe in order in all its mathematical accuracy.

Subject after subject, seeds of truth are sown. God gives knowledge and understanding. Wisdom comes by applying God's truth to that understanding.

In other words, GOD is significant in every area of study. To segregate God out of education is to present Him as insignificant and irrelevant.

In a Christian school the students are taught by Christian teachers

For seven hours a day, five days a

week, 36 weeks per year, a child is in school. The most significant role model a child has besides his parents is his teacher. The Bible states in Luke 4, that a student shall become as his teacher. It does not say they will learn from what the teacher says as much as they will learn from who they are. To raise godly children, it is imperative they have godly parents and teachers as role models. A Christian teacher will pray for and with a student. When a student comes to a difficult situation, they will be taught to bring that problem to God. Bad attitudes or problem behaviors are dealt with and discussed according to Biblical standards of right and wrong.

In a Christian school, the students are taught to honor their parents

A three-cord strand is not easily broken. When parents bind themselves to their church and a Christian school,

there is strength. The child sees agreement in all areas of his life and those in authority over him. The child is taught to respect his parents not just because he is directly told to do so, but also because what his parents are saying at home is backed up by the teacher at school. They are speaking the same thing.

Your child will be around other Christian students and be in a Christian atmosphere

No child or adult is perfect. Your child will be exposed to the world. He will have to endure temptation, even in a Christian school. The difference is the ability of a Christian school to deal with bad behaviors and influences. High standards of behavior and the disciplined atmosphere encourages growth in righteousness and respect for themselves and others.

Your child will meditate on the Word of God

To be eternally successful, a Christian must study and meditate on the Word of God. Through monthly Scripture memorization, Bible class, student chapel, and the full integration of the Bible into all subject areas, each student learns to hide God's Word in his heart. Why? So he might not sin against God (Psalms 119:11) and so in whatever he does he prospers (Psalms 1:3).

So why send your child to a Christian school?

Because it will give your child the best foundation for life! And if we can give an advantage like this to our children, shouldn't we make that a priority?



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FIRST ASSIGNMENT: Back-to-school devotion

This back-to-school devotion with prayer and scripture invites the entire family and God to celebrate the transition into school.

It's easy, during the back-to-school rush, to get lost in the shopping, enrollment, and activity of school and miss out on asking God's presence and guidance for a child or teen's education.

Gathering the whole family together for prayer

Plan the back-to-school devotion in the evening, or another time when the whole family is present and relaxed. Time the devotion activity the day before school starts up after a break of some kind, to ease the family's transition.

Invite the family to be seated around a table, in the living room, or in some other comfortable family space for about 20 minutes. Select one member of the family to be the designated leader, and instruct members of the family that they may be asked to contribute specific prayers throughout the devotion.

Prayer asking God to bless the family throughout the coming school year

During this exercise, the designated leader begins with the following prayer:

"Loving God, thank you for the gift of vacation we have all enjoyed, especially (list family members going to school). We ask Your guidance as we begin a new school year (or semester) as a family. Help us to listen to each other, be patient when others are stressed, be helpful when others are struggling, and be kind when others are frustrated.



Guide us all to be better students in Your word and ways, O God, and help us to listen to ourselves, each other, and You." Amen.

Invitation to share thanksgivings from vacation and hopes for school year

The leader then invites everyone at the table to share something they give thanks for over the following break. For example, Sydnee, age 5, gives thanks for going swimming with Grandma, while Mom gives thanks for Tawnya, age 14, babysitting her younger siblings during the day.

When everyone has shared a thanksgiving, encourage the family to share a hope for the coming school year or term. For example, Sydnee may desire to make friends at her new school, while Mom hopes that all the children will clean up

after themselves when they come home from school.

Sharing the word, Jesus in the temple

For the next step, the leader can read Luke 2:45-47, and 52 to the group gathered.

"When Jesus' parents" could not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among his teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers... And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor."

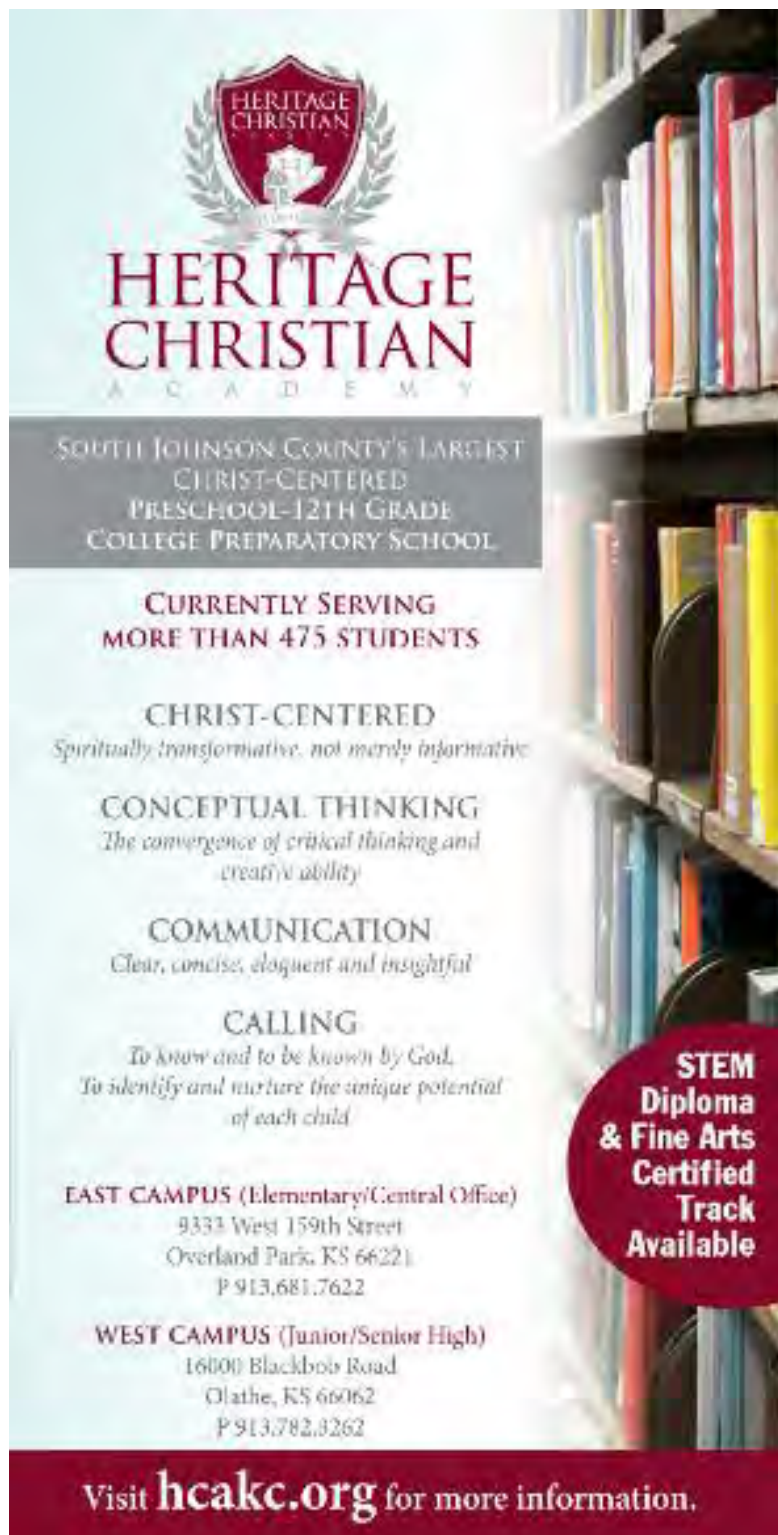
How to close in prayer

To conclude, the participants can invite everyone at the table to hold hands and join together in the following prayer:

"Loving God, You brought Your Beloved Son to the temple to learn from His teachers, and You guided Him to increase in wisdom and divine favor. Guide those of us attending school to listen to our teachers and ask them questions, as Jesus did. Encourage us all to learn and grow as much as possible in the image of Your Son, Jesus, that our family might live in the light of Your love. Amen."

You can also conclude by saying the "Lord's Prayer" together as a family.

This is a great way to transition from vacation time to the faster pace of school and at the same time, honor Christ in our daily activities and school goals.



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SURVIVING HIGH SCHOOL AS A CHRISTIAN

by **Susan Barclay**

One of the two youth groups my daughter attends sees the high schoolers themselves leading worship and delivering the evening's message. This is good in theory but can be quite iffy in practice - not so much the music part, but the public speaking part, especially if there's no guidance or someone to look over what you intend to say.

Recently the parents had a chance to participate in one of the meetings, and the speaker's topic was "How to survive high school as a Christian." The boy looked to be in grade 10, so the fact is, he hasn't survived high school yet. And he'd only scribbled a few notes on his subject that afternoon. It was apparent he hadn't put much thought into it or asked anyone to give him feedback.

His strategies for surviving high school as a believer come down to this: bob and weave, duck and run. If someone asks why you don't participate in certain activities, think fast and come up with an answer that distracts from your faith, or tell the person you're a loser. Not very courageous, not very victorious. Not, I'm afraid, very honest.

The Bible tells us in 1 John 5:3-5 that "This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."



Jesus said in Luke 9:26, "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."

My daughter's favorite verse is Psalm 27:1, which says, "The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?"

Christians are conquerors, not losers - we have the gifts of eternal life (famously expressed in John 3:16) and salvation. We should be neither ashamed,

nor afraid.

As someone who did survive high school while being a Christian, I would offer the following advice to those who aspire to do likewise:

■ First of all, make sure your faith is your own and that you're not just going along with your parents/church. You're not a Christian if you haven't made it personal, no matter what your heritage/tradition.

■ Know what you believe and why you believe it. If you don't know these

basic things, how can you be strong or defend your faith if necessary? Books like *Know What You Believe* and *Know Why You Believe* by Paul Little, and *The Case for Christ* (teen version) by Lee Strobel are resources that explain Christianity well.

■ Try to find like-minded friends who can support you and hold you accountable. Your school might have a club for Christian students, or you may know some of your classmates from church or youth group. Meeting together weekly for Bible study, prayer, discussion, and fellowship can be life-saving and life-giving.

■ Just say no - no to smoking, drinking, drugs, and any other activity that doesn't fit with your Christian values. You aren't obligated to explain yourself, but you can choose to tell people that you don't think those pursuits are "cool," that they don't sit well with you, that you're unique and don't follow the crowd, or that you have boundaries that stem from being a Christ-follower. You

don't want to soil your temple, His dwelling place.

■ Part of the human problem, not just the teenage problem, is that we want to be liked. We want our peers to accept us and not reject us. Unfortunately, this is the life we are called to if we are to be true Christ-followers. In the Beatitudes Jesus said, "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:11-12)

■ It may not be easy, but remember this: "your reward in heaven is great." Alone, it isn't possible to survive high school as a Christian. But with God, all things are possible. Not only can you survive the high school years, but you can thrive in them. May God bless you as you stay true to Him and His Word.

Susan Barclay is a successful writer and has a degree in library science. www.susan-barclay.ca.

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Distance learning



How to succeed with distance learning

by **Gen and Kelly Tanabe**

Imagine sitting in the comfort of your living room in pajamas and slippers while participating in a classroom discussion of English literature. Seem impossible? Through distance learning, you can do exactly this. Distance learning provides courses over the Internet, allowing you to learn without leaving your home or stepping on a college campus. It can provide the flexibility that you need to do schoolwork around your existing schedule.

However, while distance learning sounds attractive, it may not be for everyone. Some students just don't learn as well when not in the presence of a professor and roomful of students. In fact, some students find that it is the classroom setting with the interactions, debate and discussions continued after class in hallways and student centers that is the real benefit of going to college. Plus, there's less guilt

from skipping a distance learning class than in-person classes. This means that you must be extremely self-motivated to attend the online sessions and complete your assignments.

Yet, despite these drawbacks, distance learning is still a viable option for many adult students. Here, we outline how distance learning programs work, how to figure out if they are right for you, how to select the best ones and how to succeed in a program.

1. Understand how distance learning works.

As its name suggests, distance learning basically means that you will receive instruction from a distance, typically via the Internet. Through distance learning, you may take individual courses to learn specific skills or even complete an entire degree.

Typically, instead of going to a physical classroom, your meeting place is the In-

ternet. Work is similar to that of regular courses. You will still have reading assignments, homework, quizzes and exams. What's different is you do not need to meet in a classroom at a specific time for discussions, and you can work independently. Professors give assignments online or via email, and students are often expected to participate in discussions through online message boards. You email assignments into your professor, and he or she grades them and provides feedback through email as well. You can fit the course to your schedule—such as after 10 p.m. when your kids go to sleep.

2. Know how to tell if you are a distance learner.

To determine if distance learning is right for you, see how many times you answer "yes" to the following questions. The more often you do, the more likely it is that distance learning may work for you.

Are you disciplined enough to com-



plete your coursework including homework on your own schedule while still meeting the course's deadlines?

Do you like to work independently with minimal in person interaction with others?

Are you proficient at using a computer to visit websites, send email and participate in online discussion groups?

Can you learn the material you want to study primarily through written instructions without much interaction from the professor?

Will you be willing to dedicate as much time to your distance learning program as you would to a traditional classroom program?

■ See **LEARNING** page 11



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Top 10 effective study habits for college students

It can be difficult to settle into the routine of higher education for the first time or even if you are returning to school, especially when you choose an accelerated curriculum or balance classes with a full-time job. Luckily, old habits and new distractions don't have to stand in the way of your college degree. Incorporate these top ten effective study habits for college students into your daily routine, and

watch yourself blossom into a capable, disciplined college student. They are easy to follow and implement and require only a commitment on your part to follow through.

1. Take & review thorough notes while in class

Whether you're sitting through a lecture or doing an assigned reading, always take notes. You'll absorb key terms and ideas

more quickly by writing them down immediately. Don't be afraid to ask classmates for a refresher if you miss a lecture.

2. Eliminate lifestyle distractions

Technology offers unprecedented ways to access new information. However, it also creates distractions that prevent you from concentrating on your research. Stick to academic


websites, silence your phone, and turn off your wireless connection as soon as you have enough information to write.

3. Schedule your study time

Instead of squeezing study sessions in between classes, naps, and other responsibilities, treat studying like any other class or commitment. Pick

■ See TIPS page 23

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Old School

Think you're too old to go back to school? **Think again.**

OLDER & WISER

Barista to business: If you're looking at a master's, professional, or doctoral degree, you're in good company. Overall, more people are getting these degrees in the U.S. Peak ages for finishing them range from 30 to 54.



ON A ROLL

The National Center for Education Statistics confirms this trend, noting that the average age of students has risen from 24 to 29 over the last decade, and this pattern is expected to continue.

Enrollment between 2000 & 2010



Enrollment between 2000 & 2010



DEGREE DEMAND

Just adding the business and degree, the U.S. workforce needs more.

According to E&S Today, employers in 2015 will need about 53 million more degree holders than the nation's colleges and universities will have produced at the current rate.



POST-BACCALAUREATE PAYOFF

Overall, those with graduate degrees are earning 35% more than those with bachelor's degrees. Advanced degrees are particularly valuable in the health and social/scientific fields.

WAGE % INCREASE OF GRADUATE DEGREEE OVER BACHELOR'S

(Data from Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2013)



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Things to consider when deliberating going back to college

If you are uncertain of whether to make the commitment, you are not alone. As you weigh the benefits of returning to school against the challenges and costs, keep these points in mind.

CLEARLY OUTLINE GOALS

Identifying why you want to go back to school is the first step. Do you feel like you're stuck in a rut and want to further your abilities in your current role? Do you want to switch careers entirely? Or do you want to finish that degree that you started years ago? Pinpointing your impetus will allow you to clearly state your objective and decide on a program that is right for you. In 2013, bachelor's degree holders receive \$1,108 as a median weekly wage for full-time employment, while those workers who hold only a high school diploma received \$651 as a median weekly wage for full-time employment, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Advanced degrees may yield even greater financial benefits, with master's degree holders earning up to \$221 per week more than those with bachelor's degrees, according to the BLS data.

GIVE IT A TEST RUN

Knowing what you've signed up for is crucial to being comfortable with your decision. Reduce uncertainty by going for a trial run. Easing back into an educational setting may take some getting used to, so if you are still unsure whether going back to school is right for you look for a trial program. Many schools allow prospective students to take their first class without having to commit themselves to an entire program. If you like the class, you can move forward with the program and pay \$200 for that first three-credit class. If you decide that the timing isn't right or the program isn't for you, you can walk away without any financial obligation.

ANALYZE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS

Cost always plays a part in the decision-making process. Investing in your education is exactly that: an investment. To assess whether the investment is a worthy one, consider the average salary of the career you are contemplating and how much you will gain from returning to school. Compare this number to the cost of the education, and be sure to account for tuition, fees and textbooks.

CONSIDER YOUR SCHEDULE

Between your current job and your family commitments, it is important to consider where school will fit into the equation. Many schools are built specifically for working adults, so you can rest easily knowing that the learning process is designed to fit into your busy schedule. "Earning a degree is a huge time commitment, but it can be attainable if you approach it with the right structure for optimal learning," said Tracy Lorenz, President of Western International University. Following a pattern of "Learn, Practice, Apply," students are able to watch a series of 10-minute video lectures every week, practice with quizzes and exercises, engage online with instructors and fellow students, and apply their knowledge to real-world situations through weekly assignments.

"To assess whether the investment is a worthy one, consider the average salary of the career you are contemplating and how much you will gain from returning to school."

It is beneficial, too, to seek out professors who are also practitioners. They will be better equipped to give students advice for the modern-day work environment. Because all the course material is available online, you can complete your weekly coursework and "go to school" when you have time throughout the week.

While this is a significant benefit to working adults, it is still important that you carve out time to dedicate to your education before you make the commitment. You want to ensure that you are able to put in adequate time in order to gain everything that you want to achieve from your education. (BPT)

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LEARNING

continued from page 8

Can you learn the material you want to study primarily through written instructions without much interaction from the professor?

Will you be willing to dedicate as much time to your distance learning program as you would to a traditional classroom program?

Does your schedule allow you to focus on your coursework every day?

Will you be motivated enough to complete the program even if you never speak to another student or professor aside from email and message boards?

If you answered "yes" to most of the questions above, then you should consider the benefits of distance learning.

3. Select the right distance learning program by understanding accreditation.

Unlike choosing a traditional college or university program, you don't necessarily have to choose a distance learning program within driving distance. In fact, you can choose one out of town or out of state. However, there is more to choosing a program than simply pointing and clicking on the first one that you find.

First, make sure that the program is fully accredited, especially if you plan to pursue a degree.

Employers as well as other colleges and universities place a high value on programs that are fully accredited.

4. Know the difference between certificates and degrees.

Some distance learning programs are aimed at providing certificates while others award degrees. Make sure that the program meets your academic goals.

5. Consider course selection.

Make sure that there are enough courses offered to meet your needs and interests.

Also, investigate how large the classes are to determine how much attention you

will receive as a student.

6. Find the best format for you.

There are distance-learning courses that are entirely online and those that require periodic meetings on campus. Some students combine distance-learning courses with on-campus courses. Some follow the same schedule and pace as traditional quarters and semesters while others are accelerated, which means that you cover a larger amount of material in a shorter amount of time. Distance learning programs offer a variety of formats, meaning that you will need to choose the one that works best for you.

7. Know what kind of support will be offered.

Investigate how much support is offered for distance learners. How much will you be able to interact with your professor? Is there support for technical problems? Will you have access to the same resources and facilities as on-campus students?

8. Succeed with distance learning by getting familiar with the technology first.

Some students have difficulties with distance learning because of the technology or the lack of face time with professors and classmates, but there are steps that you can take to help you succeed.

Get familiar with the technology first. Before signing up for a distance-learning program, get friendly with your computer and the Internet. If you need to, take a course at your local community college or get a tutor.

9. Start small.

If you are hesitant about distance learning, start with one class rather than jumping in and taking a number of courses. This will allow you to get your feet wet before making a huge commitment to multiple classes.

10. Make the most of your classmates.

Just like you, your classmates are there to learn. Don't be afraid to rely on them for help. Use email to stay in touch and

have discussions with your classmates. Similar to if you had taken a course in a traditional classroom setting, you'll learn a lot from your peers.

FINAL THOUGHTS ...

Most importantly, use the resources available to you. Communicate with your professor if you have questions or problems. Your professor will want to know if you are struggling with the material or if you need extra help. In addition, your school may offer extra tutoring help or other resources.


Gen and Kelly Tanabe are founders of SuperCollege and authors of 13 books on college planning.

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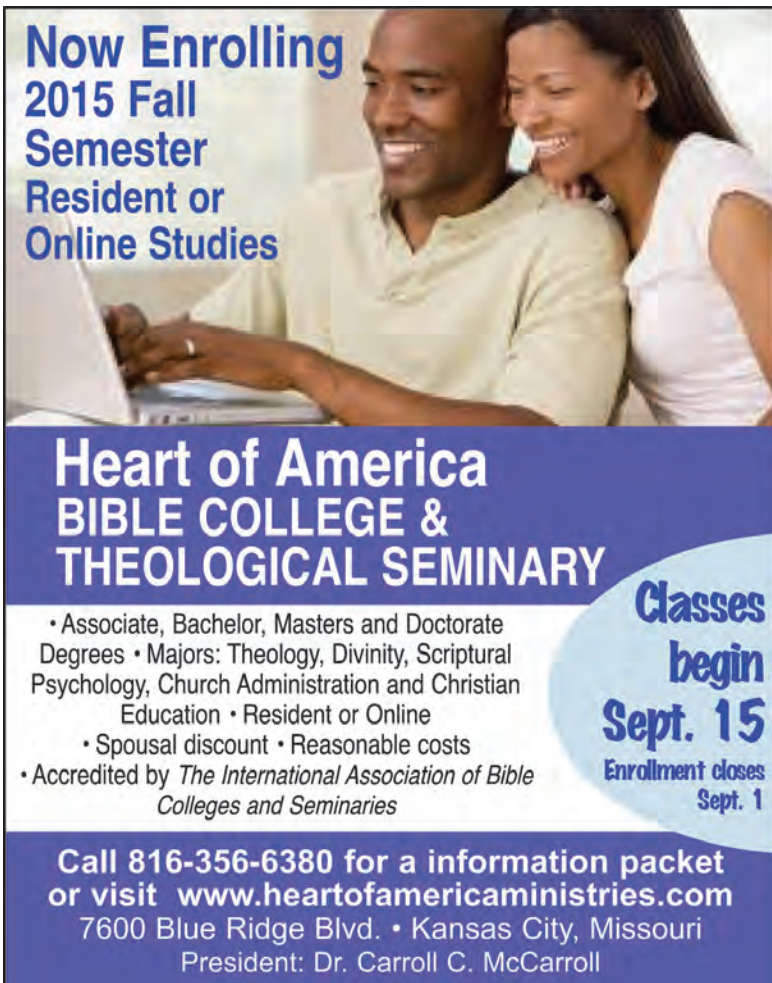
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Family Events, Christian Concerts, Theatre, Youth Events, Meetings, Clubs, Bible Studies, Family Fun, Speakers and More!

CONCERTS

OUTCRY. August 4, 7:00 pm. Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, St. Louis, MO. Ticket prices starting at \$22.00. Featuring Hillsong United/Kari Job/ Bethel Music/Passion/Lauren Daigle/Trip Lee/DJ Promte/Nick Hall. outcrytour.com/stlouis.

THE DIPLOMATS. August 5, 7:00 pm. First Christian Church, 2151 S. Jefferson, Kearney, MO 816-528-5583.

SELAH. August 9, 5:00 pm. Lenexa Baptist Church, 15320 W. 87th St. Pkwy., Lenexa, KS 66219. A benefit Concert.

PHIL AND PAM MORGAN. August 15, 6:30 pm. First United Methodist Church, 504 Pacific Ave., Osamatomie, KS. 913-755-4774

CASTING CROWNS WITH I AM THEY. August 20. Missouri State Fair, Sedalia, MO. 660-530-5611.

BREAD OF STONE. August 22, 5:00 pm doors open. Ottawa Municipal Auditorium, 301 S. Hickory St., Ottawa, KS 66067. Presented by Faith Lutheran Church and Franklin County Young Life. 785-242-8810.

SANCTUS REAL. August 23. Civic Center Park, 100 N. 4th St., St. Joseph, MO. Organized by Trails West. 816-232-1912.

THE CHUCK WAGON GANG. August 27, 7:00 pm. First Christian Church, 215 Jefferson, Kearney, MO. 816-628-5583.

NEHEMIAH FEST IX. September 18-20. Smith's Fork Park, 1601 DD Hwy., Smithville, MO 64089. Free Admission! Christian Concert and Camping Event. Nearly 50 bands on 4 stages. Food, fun fellowship. Friday headliner, John Elefante, former lead singer, Kansas! Saturday, Bread of Stone. www.nehemiahfest.com.

SWEET SPIRIT & FRIENDS GOSPEL MUSIC OUTREACH. September 19, 6:00 pm food, 7:00 pm music. Moment of Truth, 310 Randolph Road, Claycomo, MO 64119. Tribute to Outreach Founder: Riley Brown (sharing Riley's music. 816-452-4426.

DELINDA LAYNE & FRIENDS CONCERT. September 26, 6:30 pm. Leawood Baptist Church, 83rd and State Line Road - Northwest corner, Leawood, KS 66206. Delinda is coming back to town for a FREE concert. She will be joined by David Smart, Andrew Yates, Peggy Forstand, Elizabeth Birger, and more! A love offering will be taken. 913-649-0100.

NEWSBOYS CONCERT. November 12, 7:00 pm. Memorial Hall, 600 N 7th, Kansas City, KS 66101. Featuring Hawk Nelson.

SOUTHERN GOSPEL (CALL FOR GROUPS)

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.

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NEHEMIAH FEST IX. SMITH'S FORK PARK, SMITHVILLE, MO 64089. A CHRISTIAN CONCERT AND CAMPING EVENT, FEATURING FRIDAY HEADLINER JOHN ELEFANTE AND SATURDAY HEADLINER BREAD OF STONE (PICTURED). NEARLY 50 BANDS ON FOUR STAGES.

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.

MOMENT OF TRUTH BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH. THIRD SATURDAY in January, May, September & October, 7pm. 310 Randolph Rd, Claycomo, MO. Gospel music sing. 816-452-4426.

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

sing.

GOSPEL JAMBOREE. SECOND THURSDAY, 7 p.m. Life Christian Center, 1650 E Langsford Road, Lee's Summit, MO. 816-878-4694.

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

CLASSES, SEMINARS, CONFERENCES

HEALING NOW. Through August 2. World Revival Church, 9900 View High Dr, Kansas City, MO. Join Pastor Steve & Kathy Gray, JD King, Heather Eschenbaum and others for intensive, hands on training in receiving and releasing the miracle healing power of God. You

can be healed - spirit, soul, and body, and you can become a vessel of God's healing power to others. 816-763-0708.

SUMMER DANCE INTENSIVE. Through August 7. Dramatic Truth, 10510 Grandview Rd., Kansas City, MO. Ages 12-Pro. Sponsored by Dramatic Truth. 816-767-9222 dramatictruth.org.

AVOID PROBATE. August 6, 7:00 pm. Lewis Living Trust Center. 700 NE Langsford, Lee's Summit, MO 64063. 816-524-3200.

EXODUS CRY ABOLITION SUMMIT 2015. August 6-8. Folly Theater, 300 W. 12th St., Kansas City, MO 64105. Breakout Sessions Bartle Hall-North East Building, 301 W. 13th St., Kansas City, MO 64105 Rooms: 2104 A, 2104 B, 2105. Special speakers: Benjamin

Nolot, Don Brewster, Richie Cruz, Christina Rangel, Andrew Comiskey, Kezia Hatfield, Blaire Pilkington. 816-398-7490.

SAME SEX MARRIAGE - IT'S LEGAL, WHAT NOW? August 7, 5:00 pm. 890 AM KGGN. The program will feature Attorney Michael K. Whitehead, a Kansas City trail attorney with over 35 years of legal experience. Hostess, Terri Jones.

MBCH TREATMENT FOSTER CARE INFORMATIONAL MEETING. August 11, 6:30 pm. Wornall Road Baptist Church, 400 W. Meyer Blvd., Kansas City, MO; August 13, 6:30 pm. First Baptist Church, 116 W. Washington, Raymore, MO; August 18, 6:30 pm. Noland Road Baptist Church, 4505 S. Noland Rd., Independence, MO. Program for children and youth with behavioral and emotional needs who are unable to live with their own family, but don't need the structured environment of a residential facility. If you are interested in finding out more about this ministry call Chuck Phillips at 816-795-8878.

AN EVENING OF EMPOWERMENT. August 13, 6:00-9:30 pm. Whitefield Academy, 8929 Homes Rd., Kansas City, MO. 816-673-9983

AVOID PROBATE. August 18, 7:00 pm. Lewis Living Trust Center. 700 NE Langsford, Lee's Summit, MO 64063. 816-524-3200.

NEXT STEPS BIBLE STUDY. August 24, 7:00-9:00 pm. Sponsored by If Not For Grace. E-mail for information info@infgr.org.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL. August 25, 8:30 am. Heart of America Christian Academy, 7600 Blue Ridge Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64138. A great start to our 2015-2016 school year for all students Pre-K through 12th grade. 816-356-6380.

STEWART WINOGRAD. August 29, 10:00 am. Or HaOlam Messianic Congregation, 7029 W 74th St., Overland Park, KS. No charge, open to the public; and offering will be received with gratitude. Stewart ministers with Reach Initiative, bringing the good news of Messiah Yeshua's salvation to the "Jew first and also to the Gentiles" in a number of different nations. 913-383-8448.

CHILD EVANGELISM FELLOWSHIP, GOOD NEWS TRAINING MEETING. September 12, 9:00 am-4:00 pm. (Register by September 10.) BreakPointe Community Church, 10001 W. 88th St., Overland Park, KS. \$6.00. Lunch is provided, and materials are available for purchase. 816-358-1138.

BETH MOORE LIVING PROOF LIVE SIMULCAST. September 12, 8:00 am. Pisgah Baptist Church, 112 Pisgah Dr., Excelsior Spring, MO 64024. Early registration \$30 per person until July 1. After July 1, price increases to \$40. Cost includes light breakfast, lunch, the Simulcast, and materials. Capacity limited; register early. Child care is not provided. 816-630-5121.

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY COURSE. September 13, 2015, 2:00 PM. Pisgah Baptist Church, 112 PISGAH DR., Excelsior Springs, MO. 64024. Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University 9-week video

■ calendar continued on next page

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Kansas City's Home for Christian Music

course. Sundays 2-3:30 pm beginning Sept. 13. Cost \$95 per person or per married couple. 816-630-5121

FIRST NIGHT OF CLASSES. September 15, 6:00 pm. Heart of America Bible College, 7600 Blue Ridge Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64138. Please join us as we kick off our fall semester teaching and training God's leaders for His glory. 816-356-6380.

JOY STARTS HERE - KANSAS CITY. September 24-26. Colonial Presbyterian Church, 9500 Wornall Rd., Kansas City, MO 64114. You will hear from a neurotheologian, Dr. Jim Wilder who excels at combing scripture, spiritual formation, human development and the latest brain science in ways that are helping people around the world recover from trauma, recognize what is missing, and train their way to joyful maturity. Visit online: www.joystartshere.com/KansasCity 816-215-2184.

FEAST OF SUKKOT 2015. September 27-October 5. Tabernacles in Kansas City. info@sukkotkc.org

CHILD EVANGELISM FELLOWSHIP, GOOD NEWS TRAINING MEETING. September 26, 9:00 am-4:00 pm. (Register by September 24.) Blue Ridge Bible Church, 8524 Blue Ridge Blvd., Kansas City, MO. \$6. Lunch is provided, and materials are available for purchase. 816-358-1138.

PURSUING THE COMMON GOOD OF THE CITY. October 2-3, 2015, 7:00 PM. Christ Community Brookside Church, 400 W 67th St., Kansas City, MO 64113. Move beyond individual contribution, and engage together in a conversation on how to best collaborate as neighbors for the flourishing of Kansas City. cg2015@madetoflourish.org.

BRANSON FALL SPECTACULAR WEEKEND EVENT. October 9, 10, 11. 2820 W. Hwy. 76, Branson, MO 65652. Sponsored by Midwest Christian Singles. 417-297-0062.

SPECIAL CHURCH EVENTS

SHARE THE STORY. August 6, 6:30 pm. Ramada Downtown Topeka, KS. Hors d'oeuvres and dessert will be served. Sponsored by Lifeline Children's Services of Kansas. 785-783-4577.

LOVE'S OUTREACH COMMUNITY FOOD DISTRIBUTION. August 8, 10:00 am. Church on the Rock Outreach Center, 1700 SW Marker St., Lee's Summit, MO 64082. 10:00-11:00 am. Free food for families in need. Valid ID and proof of residency needed to participate. 816-246-7625.

IF NOT FOR GRACE OPEN HOUSE. Aug. 20, 4:30 - 7:30 p.m. Crown Pointe Church, 5950 NE Lakewood Way, Lee's Summit, MO.

CHRISTIAN BOOKS/RESOURCES LIQUIDATION SALE. August 10-28. International House of Prayer University Bookstore, 12901 S. US Highway 71, Grandview, MO. 816-763-3070.

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION. August 15, 9:00-10:15 am. Sponsored by If Not For Grace. E-mail for information info@infgrg.org.

CHILDREN'S BLESSING SERVICE/BACKPACK SUNDAY. August 16, 10:30 am. Church on the Rock Outreach Center, 1700 SW Market St., Lee's Summit, MO 64082. Please join us for our annual Children's Blessing Services. As part of our services we will give backpacks (filled with limited supplies) to families in need. Reservations required. Limited quantities. Children receiving backpacks need to attend services to receive backpacks. 816-246-7625.

QUILT-RS AND CRAFT-RS MARKET. August 29, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Hillside Christian Church, 900 NE Vivian Road, KCMO. Raise funds for HOPE Food Pantry. Quilters and hobbyists are able to sell their excess supplies. Booths available, \$20. Want to donate supplies, call us. Admittance \$2. 816-916-7580.

AN EVENING WITH MATTHEW KELLY. September 22, 7:00 pm. Overland Park Convention Center, 6000 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS. Registration fee: \$100 per person (\$50 is tax-deductible). Keynote speaker Matthew Kelly. Kelly uses his keen sense of humor and passion for helping organizations become the-best-version-of-themselves. His books include *The Dream Manager*, *The Rhythm of Life*, and *Off Balance*. Sponsored by Vitae Foundation. Reserve your seat by call-



AUG.
6-8

EXODUS CRY ABOLITION SUMMIT 2015 - FOLLY THEATER, 300 W. 12TH STREET, KANSAS CITY, MO. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL 816-398-7490.

ing 573-634-4316.

TGIW/CTC/PMC/DLC GOLF TOURNAMENT. September 24, Registration 10:45 am; Lunch 11:45 am; Shotgun start 12:30 pm. Creekmoo Golf Club, Raymore, MO. The cost is \$195 per person or \$700/four-some. Lunch and on-course snacks and drinks included. 816-525-6339.

BOW TIES FOR BABIES. September 25, 6:00 pm. Grand Street Café, 4740 Grand Ave., Kansas City, MO 64112. Bow Ties for Babies benefiting Alexandra's House, a community-based, volunteer, peer support perinatal hospice and infant care system for parents pregnant with babies with lethal or sub-lethal anomalies, pregnancies that end unexpectedly or any infant who passes away in our community. 816-931-5378.

2015 GOLF TOURNAMENT RACHEL HOUSE. October 9. Staley Farms Golf Club, 10310 N. Olive Ave., Kansas City, MO. Together we are making a difference two lives at a time. 816-875-1055.

MISSOURI RIGHT TO LIFE ANNUAL BANQUET. October 29, 6:00 pm. Adam's Mark, 9103 E. 39th St., Kansas City, MO 64133. Tickets on sale now for \$40. Dr. Alveda King, niece of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., will be the guest speaker at the Annual Benefit Dinner for Missouri Right to Life. 816-353-4113.

CALLING ALL CRAFTERS AND VENDORS! THE HOLMESWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH 44th ANNUAL HOLIDAY MARKET. November 14, 9:00 am-3:00 pm. Holmeswood Baptist Church, 9700 Holmeswood Rd., Kansas City, MO 64131. Registration forms: www.holmeswood.org. 816-942-1729.

FINE ARTS

FLOWERS TO FROST: FOUR SEASON IN THE EAST ASIAN ART. Through July 18, 2016. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 45th and Oak Streets, Kansas City, MO. The works of art in the exhibition are selected from the museum's world-class collections of East Asian paintings, prints, and textiles, ranging from the 12th to the 19th century. 816-751-1278

A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD. Through August 2. Crown Center, 2450 Grand Ave., Suite 144, Kansas City, MO 64108. Part vaudeville, part make-believe, all charm, *A Year with Frog and Toad* tells the story of a friendship that endures, weathering all seasons. The jazzy upbeat score bubbles with melody and wit, and inventive, exuberant, and enchanting musical for the whole family. 816-474-6552.

THE ADDAMS FAMILY. Through September 20. New Theatre Restaurant, 9229 Foster, Overland Park, KS 66212. 913-649-7469.

MARY POPPINS. August 1. Starlight Theatre, 4600 Starlight Rd., Kansas City, MO 64132. kcstarlight.com. 816-363-7827.

BYE BY, BIRDIE. August 1, 7, 8, 14, 15 and 16; 8:00 pm Friday & Saturday and 2:00 pm Sunday. Hollywood Theatre, 401 Delaware St., Leavenworth, KS. Presented

by The River City Community Player. 913-651-0027.

SHREK, THEATRE IN THE PARK. August 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8; 8:30 pm. Shawnee Mission Park, 7710 Renner Rd., Shawnee Mission, KS. General admission only \$8, youth \$6, and children three and under may attend for free. Sponsored by Johnson County Park & Recreation. www.theatreinthepark.org/2015-season.

BYE BYE BIRDIE. August 20-22. Paradise Park, Lee's Summit, MO. Lee's Summit Community Theatre. www.summittheatregruop.com. 816-463-2654.

HERO STORIES. August 22. Puppetry Arts Institute, 11025 E. Winner Rd., Independence, MO 64052. 816-833-9777.

CIRQUE ÉLOIZE ID. September 8-13. Starlight Theatre, 4600 Starlight Rd., Kansas City, MO 64132. 816-363-7827.

INTO THE WOODS, JR. September 11, 12 and 13. Hollywood Theatre, 401 Delaware St., Leavenworth, KS. Presented by The River City Community Payers. 913-651-0027.

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE. September 15, 25, October 2; 7:30 pm. September 19, 26, October 3; 7:30 pm. September 20, 27, October 4; 2:00 pm. The Barn Players 6219 Martway, Mission, KS. \$18. 913-402-6920.

FAMILY OUTINGS

DISCOVERY AND RECOVERY: PERSERVING IRAQI JEWISH HERITAGE. Through August 15. National Archives, 400 W. Pershing Rd., Kansas City, MO 64108. Free and open to the public. The exhibit details the dramatic recovery of historic materials relating to the Jewish community in Iraq from a flooded basement in Saddam Hussein's intelligence headquarters. In both English and Arabic, the 2,000 square foot exhibit features 23 recovered items and a "behind the scenes" video of the fascinating yet painstaking preservation process. 816-268-8000.

REOPENING THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF TOYS AND MINIATURES. August 1. The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures, 5235 Oak St., Kansas City, MO 64112. Free parking in available off 52nd Street in front of the museum. New exhibits and experiences.

HEART OF AMERICA HOT DOG FESTIVAL. August 1, 12:00 pm. Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, 1616 E. 18th St., Kansas City, MO 64108. Hosted by the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. 816-221-1920

THE FESTIVAL OF BUTTERFLIES. August 1, 2 & 7-9; 9:00 am to 6:00 pm each day. Powell Gardens, 1609 NW US Hwy. 50, Kingsville, MO 64061. Festival admission \$12/adult, \$10/seniors 60+. \$5/children ages 5 through 12. Free/children 4 and under. Powell Garden's signature festival returns for its 19th year! See hundreds of colorful, free-flying butterflies in the indoor conservatory. Learn more about monarchs and what you can do to protect them and other native species in our two outdoor butterfly breezeways. 816-697-2600.

IMAGINE ELEVEN. August 2 & 9, 6:00-8:30 pm. August 2-The Elders; August 9-Soca Jukebox. Coleman Hawkins Park/Felix Square, downtown St. Joseph, MO. Free music, affordable food, community, friendship, and raising awareness and support for faith-based mental health services provider, The Center.

WEEKENDER MOVIES. August 7, 9:00 pm (approximately). "Frozen" (Sing-A-Long). Crown Center, 2450 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64108. Cap off your work week with top local bands and favorite food trucks. Shop the wares of KC artisans and finish the evening with a movie under the stars. (Please note pets are not permitted at the event.)

SOUNDS ON THE SQUARE. August 14 - Travis Marvin; August 21 - Carl Worden Band. 7:00-9:30pm. Linden Square, 602 NE 70th St., Gladstone, MO 64118. Sponsored by City of Gladstone. 816-423-4092.

SOUNDS ON THE SQUARE SATURDAY NIGHT CONCERT SERIES. August 15, 8:00-10:30 pm. Linden

Square, 602 NE 70th St., Gladstone, MO 64118. Members only. Sponsored by City of Gladstone. 816-432-4092.

ARCHAEOLOGY DAY. August 15, 10:00 am & 2:00 pm. Fort Osage, Sibley, MO. Adults \$7, youth \$4, seniors \$3. Professional archaeologists will present an overview of over 60 years of investigations which have enabled historians to establish both the historic and pre-historic history of the nationally recognized historic site. 816-503-4860.

SUMMER DUSK CONCERT SOL DE CHIAPAS MIR-IMBA. August 15, 7:00 pm. The Collonade at Concourse Park, St. John Ave. & Benton Blvd., Kansas City, MO. Bring a blanket or a folding chair, and if you'd like, a picnic basket or cooler with your favorite snacks and beverages. Sponsored by Northeast Arts KC.

JACOMO CHORALE RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS. August 20, 7:00-9:00 pm. Mission Woods Community

■ calendar continued on next page

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AUG. 16 **CHILDREN'S BLESSING SERVICE/BACKPACK SUNDAY. 10:30 A.M. AT THE CHURCH ON THE ROCK OUTREACH CENTER, 1700 S.W. MARKET ST., LEE'S SUMMIT, MO 64082**

historic site. 816-503-4860.

SUMMER DUSK CONCERT SOL DE CHIAPAS MIR-IMBA. August 15, 7:00 pm. The Collonade at Concourse Park, St. John Ave. & Benton Blvd., Kansas City, MO. Bring a blanket or a folding chair, and if you'd like, a picnic basket or cooler with your favorite snacks and beverages. Sponsored by Northeast Arts KC.

JACOMO CHORALE RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS. August 20, 7:00-9:00 pm. Mission Woods Community of Christ Church, 2800 Duncan Rd & Saunders, Blue Springs, MO. Prospective singers will go through a

process of voice placement, held on Thursday evenings. 816-355-0114.

BUFFALO BILL DAYS FESTIVAL. August 22-23. Ray Miller Park, Leavenworth, KS. This festival was created to help local non-profit raise needed funds. lvfestival-committee@yahoo.com

28th ANNUAL BINGHAM-WAGGONER ANTIQUE & CRAFT FAIR. August 29, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Bingham-Waggoner House, 313, W. Pacific, Independence, MO 64051. Free admission. Blues, BBQ & Bucks at the Bingham, live music, dancing, lots of great food, fun

and antique appraisals. 816-461-3491.

SNOWZOO. August 29-30, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm. Kansas City Zoo, 6800 Zoo Dr., Kansas City, MO 64132. Are you ready to cool off? Beat the heat with the animals. Nikita and Berlin will enjoy an icy paradise when you dump three tons of ice into the Polar Bear Passage. Our river otters will also be enjoying icy treats. Bring a camera and have your picture taken with our popular winter princesses. 816-595-1234.

2015 KANSAS CITY REGIONAL QUILT FESTIVAL. September 19-21, 10:00 am. Overland Park Convention Center 600 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS 66211. Fifteen Quilt Guilds from the Kansas City area are participating and will include many vendors. Friday & Saturday 10:00 am-6:00 pm, Sunday 10:00 am - 3:00 pm. 913-486-5694.

REGULAR MEETINGS

BUILDING BETTER MOMS. The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, 13720 Roe Ave., Leawood, KS. For local mothers of children in early childhood, elementary school, middle school, high school, and for single moms, with both day and evening meeting times available at the Leawood campus. www.cor.org 913-897-0120.

WEEKLY - CHRISTIAN BUSINESS MEN'S COMMITTEE meets weekly in various parts of the city. Call Jim Mathis, 913-269-6709, for time and location.

WEEKLY - FAITH BASED 12-STEP PROGRAM OF RECOVERY FROM COMPULSIVE OVEREATING. Call Overeater's Anonymous 913-383-5933 or visit www.kansascityoa.org for more information and to access the schedule of various meetings in the area.

MONTHLY - MISSOURI RIGHT TO LIFE CHAPTERS

816-353-4113; KANSANS FOR LIFE CHAPTERS 913-268-8486.

2ND & 4TH SUN. - METRO CITIZEN'S COALITION. 2:30 pm. Trails West Library, 11401 E. 23rd, Independence, MO. Free. Open to public. Rear parking & entrance. 816-781-6394.

3RD SUNDAY. CANCER SUPPORT GROUP. 6:30-8:00 pm. Beacon Free Baptist Church, 10825 E. 79th Street, Raytown, MO 64138. Connect with others who share your journey, you are not alone. 816-353-7447.

MONDAY-HEALING ROOMS MINISTRIES. 4:00-6:00 pm. Hope City, 5101E. 24th St., Kansas City, MO.

MONDAY - JOB TERMINATION SUPPORT GROUP. 7PM. Christ's Church, 5500 W. 91st St., (91st & Nall), OPKS. If you've been laid off or terminated and are looking for peer support please join us. We pray for each other and are doing readings from "Battlefield of the Mind". 913-648-2271.

2ND & 4TH MONDAY - MOPS. 9:30 a.m. MOPS. First Baptist Raytown, 10500 E 350 Highway, Raytown, MO Support groups for mothers of preschool-aged children. Offers creative activities, social events & learning opportunities. 816-353-1994.

2ND & 4TH MONDAY - JOB LOSS SUPPORT. 9-10am. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 7851 W. 119th St., OPKS. 913-381-1285.

TUESDAY, IF NOT FOR GRACE PRAYER. 9:30 am. Crown Pointe Church, 5950 NE Lakewood Way, Lee's Summit, MO 64086. kmiller@inf.org

TUESDAY - FEAR NOT SUPPORT GROUP. 7pm. New Summit Presbyterian Church, 1800 NE Independence Ave., Lee's Summit, MO. Christ-Centered support group for anxiety and depression. Material based on the Christian 12 Steps; Serenity Prayer also

Anxiety Centre "The Anxiety/Phobia Workbook" by Edmund Bourne.

TUESDAY - CELEBRATE RECOVERY. 7pm. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 7851 W. 119th St., OPKS. Christ centered 12-step program for anyone with a hurt, hang-up, or addiction. Contact Craig Hauser, 913-449-7265.

TUESDAY - HURT, HABIT OR HANG-UP. 7pm. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 7851 W. 119th St., OPKS. 913-449-7265.

TUESDAY - CHRISTIAN MUSIC NIGHT. 7 - 9 pm. Skate World, I-35 & Shawnee Mission Parkway, Mission, KS. 913-262-0711.

TUESDAY - HEARTLAND HEALING ROOMS. 7:00-8:30 pm. Christ Triumphant Church, 401 NE Chipman Rd., Lee's Summit, MO. Visit online: www.heartland-healingrooms.org.

1ST TUESDAY - CREATION SCIENCE ASSN. FOR MID-AMERICA. 7 p.m., Westbrooke Church, 9777 Antioch, OPKS. Nursery available for fee. "Creation Safari." www.csama.org. Resrv. req. 816-618-3610.

1ST TUESDAY-FIBROMYALGIA SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS. 7:00 pm., Life Springs Church, Neos Youth Center, 206 N. Webster St., Suite 112, Spring Hill, KS. Contact Kim: fibrohopeandhealing@yahoo.com or 337-852-5052.

1ST & 3RD TUESDAY - GRIEFSHARE. 7-8:30pm. Timothy Lutheran Ministries, 425 NW RD Mize Rd., Blue Springs, MO. 816-228-5300.

1ST & 3RD TUESDAY. MOPS & MOMS NEXT. 10am. Roanoke Baptist Church, 3950 Wyoming St., KCMO. Call or email Bo Price for info. pastor@roanokebaptist.org or 816-561-4932.

■ calendar continued on next page

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Stewart Winograd

Guest Shabbat Service Speaker
Saturday, August 29, 10 AM

Stewart, a Messianic Rabbi licensed with the IAMCS, ministers with Reach Initiative, bringing the good news of Messiah Yeshua's salvation to the "Jew first and also to the Gentiles" in a number of different nations. RI plants and strengthens Messianic Jewish Congregations; raises up Generation Next, future generations of on fire Messianic leaders and ministers who will change their world; serves the poor, needy and oppressed through their Project 58 Initiatives; teaches on the Jewish roots of the faith, bringing greater understanding and unity between Jewish believers and their Gentile counterparts. *No charge, open to the public; an offering will be received with gratitude.*

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(From left) Jim Daly, Focus On The Family; Chuck Swindoll, Insight For Living; John MacArthur, Grace To You; Jane Hunt, Hope In The Night; Alister Begg, In The Heart; Tony Evans, The Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans; James MacDonald, Walk In The Word; David Jeremiah, Turning Point; Adrian Rogers, In The North Country; Crawford Long, Legacy Network; And More Yet! For Online Programs: Schedule



AUG. 1

HEART OF AMERICA HOT DOG FESTIVAL. 12:00 P.M. NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL MUSEUM, KANSAS CITY, MO 64108. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 816-221-1920.

2ND TUESDAY, MOPS. 6:30 p.m. Emmanuel Baptist Church, 10100 Metcalf Ave., OPKS. 913-649-0900.

2ND TUESDAY. EQUIPPING BELIEVERS MID-WEST. 7:00 pm. Blue Spring, La Quinta Inn, 3402 NW Jefferson St., Blue Springs, MO 64015. Free Prayer for healing and freedom from addiction, Free training to heal the sick, evangelize the lost, set the oppressed free. 913-488-6749.

2ND & 4TH TUESDAY. "WINGS OF HOPE." Blue Springs Christian Church, 7920 S. 7 Hwy, Blue Springs, MO. A Christian based ministry to provide support for families grieving loss through miscarriage or infant death, because every life matters. Email: wingsofhope@bscc.org 816-210-4594.

2ND & 4TH TUESDAY, MOPS. 9 a.m. Emmanuel Baptist Church, 10100 Metcalf Ave., Overland Park, KS. 913-649-0900.

3RD TUESDAY, LUNCH & LEARN. 12:00 pm. KC First Church of Nazarene, 11811 State Line Rd. Kansas City, MO 64114. Each session will focus on a different geographical area or skill set. Please bring your own sack lunch; desserts and beverages will be provided. 816-942-9022.

TUESDAY & THURSDAY, LIFE PERKS COFFEE HOUSE. 7:30-11:30 a.m., inside First Baptist Church, 125 N. Armstrong, Pleasant Hill, MO. 816-540-5872.

WEDNESDAY - HEALING ROOMS MINISTRIES. 1:30-3:00 pm. Hope City, 5101 E. 24th St., KCMO.

WEDNESDAY WEEKLY - LIVING FREE, CHRIST-CENTERED 12 STEP PROGRAM. Room 6, 6:30-8:15. Abundant Life Baptist Church, 414 SW Persels, LS, MO. 816-554-8181.

WEEKLY WEDNESDAY - CHRISTIAN BUSINESS CONNECTIONS NETWORK. 3:00 pm, Gusto! Coffee, 3390 SW Fascination Dr., Lee's Summit, MO 64081

WEDNESDAY - GRIEF SHARE. 6:30pm. Summit Woods Baptist Church, 2501 SE Shenandoah Dr., Lee's Summit, MO 64063. A ministry that assists those who have suffered loss through the death of a loved one. 816-525-8215.

WEDNESDAY - BREAK TIME CLUB. 9:30 a.m. to

2:30 p.m. Timothy Lutheran Church, 425 NW R.D. Mize Rd., Blue Springs, MO 64014. Enriching environment for older adults with mental and/or physical limitation. \$10 donation. 816-228-5300.

WEDNESDAY - AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP. 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 601 E. Oak St., Pleasant Hill, MO (please use North basement entrance off Myrtle Street). Are you troubled by someone else's drinking?

WEDNESDAY - CELEBRATE RECOVERY. 6:30 p.m. at First Baptist Raytown, 100500 E. 350 Hwy., Raytown, MO. Please enter through the rock entrance. Meet in room B-116. For info call: 816-778-1156 or www.firstbaptistraytown.com

WEDNESDAY - CATCH THE FIRE SOAKING PRAYER CENTER. 7-9pm. 816-804-8283.

WEDNESDAY - DELIVERANCE - BREAKING CURSES WORKSHOP. First Love Ministries Church, 4747 Hadley St., Overland Park. 7 p.m. 913-403-9644. Call Tues. - Fri. after 1 p.m.

2ND WEDNESDAY - LEE'S SUMMIT WOMEN'S PRAYER CONNECTION. 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. In a comfortable setting, we get to know each other better and take time to pray (silently or audibly) for our nation, families, Lee's Summit Women's Connection, and our national organization. Call Millie Mathews for meeting location: 816-537-9898.

2ND WEDNESDAY, COFFEE CONNECT. 6:30 pm. IHOPU, 12901 S. US Highway, Grandview, MO 64030. An informal gathering with believers from different spheres of influence. www.ihopekc.org/josephcompany.

3RD WEDNESDAY - CHRISTIAN BUSINESS CONNECTIONS NETWORK. 3pm. Gusto! Coffee, 3390 SW Fascination Dr., Lee's Summit, MO 64081. 816-767-1100.

4TH WEDNESDAY - SOUTH KANSAS CITY AGLOW. 9:30 a.m. Grandview Assembly of God Church, 12400 Grandview Rd., Grandview, MO. 816-761-5739.

LAST WEDNESDAY CHRISTIAN LEGAL SOCIETY

■ calendar continued on next page

Become a Friend of Heartland Habitat and support our Christian housing ministry. For just \$25, you can help build a home!

Your \$25 will purchase:

- 8 2x4's for construction
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- 2 window shades
- The front door lock-set
- Light fixture for the children's bedroom
- Electric outlet covers for the entire house

Call 816-468-7190 and 913-342-3047 or visit www.heartlandhabitat.org

12TH ANNUAL TGIW/CTC/PMM/DLC Golf Tournament

A fundraising event for four locally-based, national ministries

Creekmoor Golf Club
Raymore, Mo.
Reg. 10:45 • Lunch at 11:15
Putting/Chipping Contest 11:45
Shotgun Start 12:30p
Lunch and on-course snacks and drinks included.
Special Speaker: Dan Meers—KC Wolf

Prizes and Awards to follow.
The cost is \$195 per person or \$700/foursome.
Variety of Sponsorship Levels are available.

Contact Rod Handley at rhandley@kc.rr.com or 816-525-6339 or Greg Griffin at ggriff60@gmail.com or 816-885-1306

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1 in 3 women needs a safe, confidential place to share the pain and loss abortion has caused in their life.
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Summit, MO. A group of encouraging Moms getting together to grow and serve Christ. 7-9pm. albcmom-sination@gmail.com.

1ST THURSDAY - CITYWIDE PRAYER MOVEMENT. Colonial Presbyterian Church, 9500 Wornall Rd., KCMO, 7:00 a.m. 816-217-5679.

1ST THURSDAY - HEART OF AMERICA CHRISTIAN WRITERS' NETWORK (HACWN). Evangel Temple, 1414 E 103rd St., KCMO. \$3 members, \$5 nonmembers. Evangel Temple-816-942-1414.

1ST & 3RD THURSDAY - NEW HOPE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP. 6:30-8:30pm. Liberty Manor Baptist Church, Birmingham Rd., Liberty, MO. This group offers a safe and confidential environment to share your hope, struggles, and feelings of your cancer journey with others who understand. 816-217-5813.

2ND THURSDAY - FIBROMYALGIA SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS. 7:00 pm Countryside Christian Church, 6101 Nall Ave., Mission, KS. Contact Yvonne info@fibrocoalition.org or call 913-384-4673.

2ND & 4TH THURSDAY MOPS. 9 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. (Mothers of Preschoolers) Overland Park First Assembly of God, 7700 W 75th Street, OP, KS. A relaxed time of fellowship, encouragement, and support for mothers of children from infants to kindergarten. Childcare provided. Brunch served. RSVP apprec. 913-432-3281 or opagmops@gmail.com

2ND & 4TH THURSDAY - ARCHDIOCESAN CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP. 7:30 p.m. at Cure of Ars, Vianney Center, 9401 Mission Rd, Leawood. Fellowship follows. 913-649-2026.

3RD THURSDAY - AFTERCARE PROGRAM. Life Group meetings. All past participants are encouraged to attend for a time of fellowship. For more information or if you would like to volunteer to help please contact Lori, 816-847-2911. Spon. by If Not For GRACE Ministries. Committed to healing after an abortion.

3RD THURSDAY - HEALING MASS. Council for Charismatic Renewal, 7:30 pm, Cure of Ars Church, Father Burak Room, 9401 Mission Rd, Leawood. 913-649-2026.

3RD THURSDAY- NKC WOMEN'S CONNECTION. Maple Woods Community College- Campus Center Building. 2601 NE Barry Rd, KCMO. 6 p.m. \$10. Free Nursery. By Reservation Only. Call Judy: 816-222-4493.

3RD THURSDAY - GLUTEN FREE GROUP. 7pm. Fireplace Room, Timothy Lutheran Church, 425 NW R.D. Mize Rd., Blue Springs, MO. 816-228-5300.

3RD THURSDAY - FOOD DISTRIBUTION BY HARVESTER'S. 4:00 pm. Fort Osage Church of the Nazarene, 19333 E. 24 Hwy, Independence, MO 64056. 816-796-5879.

4TH THURSDAY - CHRISTIAN BUSINESS CONNECTIONS NETWORK. 1:30pm. Panera Bread, 151st & I-35, 20120 W. 153rd St., Olathe, KS. 913-397-8383.

LAST THURSDAY - TRANSPLANT SUPPORT GROUP. 6:30pm. Osawatomie Wesleyan Church, 406 4th St., Osawatomie, KS. For anyone who has had an organ transplant or their family members, anyone awaiting a transplant, anyone who has been a donor, or anyone who is the relative of a deceased donor. 913-755-3453.

FRIDAY - CELEBRATE RECOVERY MEETINGS. 7:00 pm. New Hope Church of the Nazarene, 4330 N. Oak Trafficway, Kansas City, MO 64116. 12 steps program for all life's hurts, hang-ups and habits.

FRIDAY - BIZZBIZ CONNECT. 8:30am. City Union Mission's Chambers Room, 1100 E. 11th St., KCMO 64106. Enter through the double glass doors on the far right. www.bizbizconnect.com. 816-474-9380.

FRIDAY - REFORMERS UNANIMOUS. 7:00 P.M. 901 E. 23rd St., Indep., MO. Faith based addictions program (any and all addictions). 816-252-3268.

FRIDAY - CELEBRATE RECOVERY, A CHRIST CENTERED RECOVERY MINISTRY. 7 - 9 p.m. Crossroads Christian Church, 5855 Renner Road, Shawnee, KS. Childcare prov. 913-669-2088.

FRIDAY, CELEBRATE RECOVERY. 6:00 PM. First Baptist Raytown, 10500 E. 350 Hwy., Raytown, MO. Please enter through the rock entrance. Meet in room B-101. For info. call 816-778-1156 or www.firstbaptistraytown.com

FRIDAY - CHRISTIAN MOTORCYCLIST. 7:00 PM. Leave. Price Chopper- 7 HWY & Shawnee Mission PKWY. Weather permitting. Ride info: 913-422-7006.

FRIDAY - CELEBRATE RECOVERY. 7:00 PM. Pleasant Valley Baptist Church, 1600 N. 291 Hwy., Liberty, MO. For info. Call 816-781-5959

2ND FRIDAY - FIBROMYALGIA SUPPORT GROUP MEETING. 11:30AM-1:00PM. Hy-Vee, 3504 Clinton Pkwy, Lawrence, KS. Spon. by Fibromyalgia Coalition International. Contact Rachel rachelfibro@gmail.com or 785-979-5393, 11am-7pm.

SATURDAY'S. GRIEF SHARE MINISTRIES. 10:00 am. KC First Church of the Nazarene, 11811 State Line Rd, Kansas City, MO 64114. If you've lost a spouse, child, family member or friend, you have probably found that there are not many people who understand the deep hurt you feel. Join GriefShare at KC First Church of the Nazarene for weekly meetings with other going through loss. To register, or for more information, please call the church office at 816-942-9022.

1ST SATURDAY - FIBROMYALGIA SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS. 10:30AM-11:30AM. Woods Chapel Methodist Church, 4725 NE Lakewood Way, 3rd floor (south side - office entrance). Spon. by Fibromyalgia Coalition International. Contact Mary at mdwils47@yahoo.com or 816-220-7356.

1ST SATURDAY - KCCM SONGWRITERS GROUPS 10AM - 1PM. Susquehanna Baptist Church, 17800

Susquehanna Ridge, Indep., MO 64056. No Charge. Groups meet to critique, learn, and co-write. Open to all songwriters, lyricists & musicians. 816-540-4197.

1ST SATURDAY - THE CROWN. 10:00 am. MOPS, 7411 Outer Road, Odessa, MO 64076. We believe that better moms make a better world. www.mops.org

2ND SATURDAY - KCCM SONGWRITERS GROUPS. 10AM - 1PM. Emmanuel Baptist Church, 10100 Metcalf Ave., OPKS. No Charge. Groups meet to critique, learn, and co-write. Open to all songwriters, lyricists & musicians. 816-540-4197.

2ND SATURDAY - SIMPLY SINGLES. 7:15 pm. Timothy Lutheran Ministries, Fellowship Hall, 425 NW RD Mize Rd., Blue Springs, MO 64014.

3RD SATURDAY - CAR CARE SATURDAY. 8:30 a.m. 9634 W. 87th Street, Overland Park, KS. 913-206-4030. Spon. Heartland Christian Fellowship. Provides free car care to senior citizens, single parents, and families in need. Vehicle donations accepted. Call for appoint-

ment. 913-206-4030.

3RD SATURDAY FRIENDS OF ESTER. 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. 26 N. Delaware, Butler, MO. A time of fellowship, worship, and teaching by Dr. Joyce Wallace. Comp. lunch. mggamber@sbcglobal.net

4th SATURDAY-FIBROMYALGIA SUPPORT GROUP MEETING. 10:30 am. Green Acres Market, 4175 Mulberry Drive in Briardiff, Kansas City, MO Northland. Contact Phyllis at pwoolard47@gmail.com. 816-888-1460.

4TH SATURDAY - FIBROMYALGIA SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS. 11:00 am. South Summit Christian Church, 1121 SW Hook Rd., Lee's Summit, MO. Contact Jennifer at stayingstrongtogether@gmail.com or 816-977-7469.

4TH SATURDAY - TEEN CLUB FOR THOSE WITH DISABILITIES. 10am - 2pm. Timothy Lutheran Church, 425 NW RD Mize Rd., Blue Springs, MO. 816-228-5300.

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Back-to-School Nutrition

Empower your kids through better food

August is "back-to-school" month, and that means back to the school cafeteria. More and more parents are realizing the critical link between what we eat and our overall health. Children who eat nutritious foods simply function better, do bet-

ter in school, have better focus, have better behavior and are sick less often. The public school cafeteria certainly does not cater to good health and unfortunately, not much has changed over the last few decades in spite of mounds of research showing how critically important our food choices are to our health and well being.

For example, I decided to pull up the 2015 lunch calendar for our local school district. Keep in mind this is a menu for elementary school children who are in the prime years of physical and mental growth and learning. Here is a sample of the food offered during a typical week:

Biscuits & gravy, fruit juice, macaroni & cheese, fish sticks, pancake on a stick (really?), breakfast pizza, tater tots, sweet bread, toasted cheese, chicken nuggets.

God designed the body to eat fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds and quality animal meat. This menu is full of processed man-made foods. The example I often use is to consider your family dog, cat or fish. What if you fed your pet the



above menu? How long do you think your pet would survive? If we wouldn't do this to our animals, why would we ever feed this to our children?!?! This is the reason any decent cat or dog food must con-

tain vitamins and minerals. This is a reflection of how lost our American culture is related to understanding health and nutrition.

Fortunately a few are pioneering the way to restoring health in our schools. In 1997, a study was done in Appleton, Wisconsin, where a school completely changed their menu from standard American fare to fresh, organic foods. The school, Central Alternative High School, showed immediate improvement in test scores and behavior throughout the school. The story of the Appleton project has been documented on a short DVD, Impact of Fresh, Healthy Foods on Learning and Behavior.

Here is an excerpt from their website: Principal LuAnn Coenen is amazed at the change she has seen in her school. Each year principals are required to file a report with the state of Wisconsin, detailing the number of students who have: dropped out, been expelled, been found using drugs, carrying weapons or who have committed suicide. Since the start of the program, she reported, the numbers in every category have been "zero."

Mary Bruyette, a teacher at the high school, believes "If you've been guzzling Mountain Dew and eating chips and you're flying all over the place, I don't think you're going to pick up a whole lot in class." She reports that the students are now calm and well behaved. "I don't have to deal with the daily discipline issues; that just isn't an issue here."

Can you imagine? A school where the grades are good, kids don't drop out and there are no behavior issues. It seems like a fantasy, but nutrition was the answer! Here are some tips for healthy back-to-school options:

1. Consider home-schooling. This puts you in control of your children's health and nutrition.

2. Pack a lunch. Give your children healthier options made from whole unprocessed foods...that actually taste good! Learning what healthy foods your child likes will hopefully prevent the infamous trading or throwing away of lunch items.

3. Call the school district. Are things ever going to change if parents don't cry out about this? By remaining silent you are allowing the government and the food industry to determine your children's fu-



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KENDRICK BROTHERS' 'WAR ROOM' TO SPOTLIGHT POWER OF PRAYER

entertainment

by Michael Foust

Don't tell brothers Alex and Stephen Kendrick that a movie about prayer isn't Hollywood material. After all, they rarely follow traditional movie-making protocol, and fans just keep flocking to theaters.

The makers of "Facing the Giants," "Fireproof" and "Courageous" have completed their next film, "War Room," which spotlights prayer, its power and purpose. Specifically, the movie tells the story of a prayer warrior grandmother (played by Karen Abercrombie) who mentors a young mom (Priscilla Shirer) facing a troubled relationship with her husband (T.C. Stallings).

It will release in theaters Aug. 28.

The impetus for the movie goes back to 2012, when Alex Kendrick said he and his brother felt led by God to "make a movie where we call the body of believers to pray" and to "fight in prayer."

"When I talk to other believers, almost all of them have something of a strategy for their finances, for their health, for their children's education, for their retirement," he said. "But if you ask them 'What's your strategy for prayer?' they look at you funny. What's your strategy for praying for your spouse, for your children, for your

film411

THE WAR ROOM

STARS: Priscilla Evans Shirer, T.C. Stallings, Karen Abercrombie, Beth Moore, Michael Jr., Tenae Downing
WRITERS: Alex Kendrick, Stephen Kendrick

children's future spouse, for your church, for the leaders of our country? The Lord, in Scripture, tells us to pray for these things."

It's the fifth film for the brother tandem, who have released a string of box office hits that began with the 2006 film "Facing the Giants." Their last two movies opened in the top 5, with their most recent one "Courageous" No. 1 on the first weekend in per-theater average. All of their films had low budgets by Hollywood standards. Alex is director and plays a character in the film, while Stephen is producer. The film also features Beth Moore and Michael Jr. in supporting roles.

Modern-day prayers, Alex Kendrick said, tend to focus only on things such as healing and travel safety.

"Those are elementary prayers," Kendrick said. "How do we get to the deeper things?"

The movie was filmed in and around

Charlotte, N.C., and about 85 churches of different denominations partnered to pray for and assist with the film in any ways needed — from cleaning up the set to giving rides around town. Just like every other Kendrick movie, each day on the set began with a morning devotional, with cast and crew huddled all around.

"My hope for this movie is that people walk away being called to their knees," said co-producer Gary Wheeler, who is working on his first Kendrick film. "I hope they leave this saying, 'We have to fight our battles first in prayer. We have to be strategic in the way that we pray — in the way that we attack these struggles in our lives.'"

The movie features a number of firsts for the Kendricks. It's the first one they've filmed outside of their home base of Georgia, and it's the first one they've made since they formed their own company, Kendrick Brothers Productions. The new company gives them the platform to mentor young Christian filmmakers, who help out behind the scenes.

The cast itself also features a first. Although their films have included minorities in positive lead roles, this movie goes a step further, with an African-American family being the film's primary focus. Stallings, who is black, said it's a big deal, specifically because so many mainstream films cast African-Americans in a negative light.



"I am excited that there is a film that will show the other side," said Stallings, who played a supporting role in the most recent Kendrick film. "Not every African-American man is not with his family. There are those out there who pray, who love the Lord, who are successful. For this movie to do that, it is encouraging. And I like the fact that it shows us winning against sin and problems. We're victorious, we're victorious through Christ. Maybe some families will say, 'We can do that, too. We can come out of this if we pray.'"

Shirer and Stallings were the first choices for the lead roles, Kendrick said. She honed her skills with an acting coach. Alex said she was "fantastic."

"She's just poured herself into this role," Alex said.

Stallings said he enjoyed being part of a film that seeks to make an impact on people.

"I like that when you're done watching the film, it makes you want to go and do something," he said. "For instance, I went and saw a couple of movies the other day, and they were awesome. But when they were done, I'm done. I can't put on a cape and fly."

Kendrick brother films, he said, seek to make "your life better and other people's lives better."

"This one hopefully will encourage people to pray and connect with God," Stallings said.

For more information, visit WarRoomTheMovie.com. It is rated PG for thematic elements.

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Hillsong film director praises worship band's mission to 'save souls'

The first-ever film about Australian megachurch band Hillsong United will hit theaters across the United States in September.

Michael John Warren, who directed "Hillsong — Let Hope Rise," says working with the group has made him a better person, even though he's not a believer.

The highly anticipated film chronicles the journey of Billboard award-winning Australian worship band, Hillsong United, which began in Sydney in 1998 as a pastime for youth at church, has since grown into a global sensation. The band is led by Joel Houston, the son of Hillsong founders and pastors Brian and Bobbie Houston, and all 11 band members are either volunteers or employees of the internationally recognized church.

"Their mission — without exaggeration — is to make music to save souls. They are trying to get people to discover Jesus," Warren, who has worked with Jay Z and Nicki Minaj, among other Hollywood stars, said in a statement on the film's website. "That's probably the most righteous reason to make music. Whether you're religious or not, it's hard to look at that and not feel good about it."

"I'm not a religious person," he added, "but I learned things from working with and becoming friends with the members of Hillsong United. They are lovely people. They are sincerely giving. They are sincerely supportive. I don't believe the same things they believe, but I'm learning from them and I'm taking lessons from



Joel Houston and Taya Smith rehearse for the Los Angeles Forum concert while filming Hillsong's movie "Let Hope Rise."

them, and I believe I've become a better person having spent a year studying them."

Hillsong United was not available to provide comment about Warren's statement by press time.

"Hillsong — Let Hope Rise" is produced by Jonathan Bock of Grace Hill Media, along with Matthew Weaver and Ben Field. Phil Cooke of Cooke Pictures has been named as an executive producer, along with Wayne Hughes Jr. and Greg Campbell of Cantinas Entertainment, who's financing the project.

In January, Warner Bros. abruptly pulled the film from its distribution and Relativity Studios, the third-largest mini-major film studio in the world, will now distribute the project. The film is now slated for release on Sept. 30.

"My hope is that the film gives people new perspective of what it actually looks like to believe in who Jesus is, and what it means to live a life that reflects His acceptance and love," band member Jad Gillies said previously. "I hope it encourages those who have never been into a church that perhaps church could be a safe place for them — somewhere that they could feel at home, encouraged and inspired to do great things."

In 2013, Hillsong United's third studio album Zion peaked at No. 1 on Christian album charts in Australia, the U.S. and the United Kingdom. Last year, the band scored its first-ever American Music Awards nod and in May, they won a Billboard music award in the Top Christian

■ See HILLSONG page 20

Glory Trail

Slow it down.

"But ask the animals and they will teach you." -Job

Usually it is the horses that do the teaching around the ranch but they are on a summer break - so God decided today He would instruct the cats what to teach. Why is it so hard just to slow it down and relax? There always seems to be more to do, but then you realize there is always more to do. So today - right in front of us - with complete nonverbal communication - Glory showed us a missing activity at the ranch - "Slow it down".

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musicbriefs

LIVING HOPE
(PIZZA RANCH, INC.)

FOR FANS OF:
Christian music across all genres

We like pizza (who doesn't?), but love Christian music more. When we heard about the Living Hope compilation, the brain-child of Christian-owned restaurant chain Pizza Ranch, Inc., it sounded too tasty to be true. It delivers, however, featuring new music from Michael W. Smith, Francesca Battistelli, Bart Millard of MercyMe, and an acoustic version of "Day One" by Matthew West. As with the variety of toppings you can enjoy on pizza, there's a little something for everyone on this unique collection of Christian music.

—Kevin Sparkman

OAK RIDGE BOYS
ROCK OF AGES: HYMNS &
GOSPEL FAVORITES
(GAITHER MUSIC GROUP)

FOR FANS OF:
Gaither Vocal Band,
Alabama,
Johnny Cash

Seek the definition of a successful crossover act and there you will find the Oak Ridge Boys.

For their latest offering in an ongoing and illustrious career, they once again take it back to their gospel roots on Rock Of Ages. For those needing an "Oh Brother, Where Art Thou" flavor on hymnal favorites, look no further. With a collection of songs that rival any Gaither homecoming, the 'Boys provide for a proper Americana feel on gospel favorites and more.

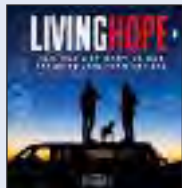
—Kevin Sparkman

MIKE LEE
ALL I NEED

FOR FANS OF:
Leeland, Matt
Redman, Charlie
Hall

Singer/songwriter/worship leader and even mixed martial arts master Mike Lee makes another artistic and spiritual leap forward on this impressive EP produced by Cody Norris, Scott Cash and Ed Cash (Chris Tomlin, David Crowder). Though written during a season of change and restlessness (including newfound fatherhood, his own dad's cancer diagnosis and balancing two careers), the vertically-tinted project overflows with a peaceful confidence in Christ, conveyed though Lee's rousing vocals and his longtime band's understated but tastefully framed instrumentation.

—Andy Argyrakakis

Dad's murder propelled
Graham into the unseen

Berta Delgado-Young | BP

In his father's hospital room, amid the whirl and thunk of life support equipment, a young Jack Graham squeezed the hand of his dad — his hero — as he had repeatedly over the last days.

This time, though, and only this time, he felt the tiniest squeeze in return, one last response from Thomas Benjamin Graham before his Lord took him home.

But the horrific events that put father and son in the hospital room in Fort Worth, Texas, opened a door to an unseen spiritual war, one waged beyond the church's familiar teachings on salvation and personal evangelism and rebellion and sin. For many, including Jack Graham, church and faith existed in the natural realm and "Spirit-led anything was relegated to the snake-handlers at the church down the street."

But that was before a thief bludgeoned his father with a hammer outside the

hardware store he managed, and before the young preacher went to a hospital chapel, emotionally broken, asking the biggest question in life: Why Father, why did this happen?

The search for answers took Graham deep into this unseen world, a world that clearly exists in the Bible but one that is unfamiliar to many professing Christians. Is Satan real or merely a representation of evil? Is the Holy Spirit a true part of the Trinity or just a symbol of God's presence?

For Graham, the existence of the supernatural world is unmistakable, stirring led him to write "Unseen: Angels, Satan, Heaven, Hell and Winning the Battle for Eternity" (Bethany House Publishers, 2013), his latest book and the one he calls his most important.

"There's more to life than what we see," Graham said. "And the world as we know it, as we see it, is passing away. But the invisible world with angels, demons, heaven and hell is forever."

The apostle Paul warned of "principal-

"There's more to life than what we see," Graham said. "And the world as we know it, as we see it, is passing away. But the invisible world with angels, demons, heaven and hell is forever."

—Jack Graham

■ See BOOK page 20

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Great concerts and albums as we move into Autumn



D.C. JEANES
Metro Voice
music critic

musicscene

What a whirlwind summer's been! From travel, to strange cooler-than-normal weather, to crazy storms and downed tree limbs, it's been one heck of a ride! Fortunately, we've got some great inspirational concerts and albums coming as autumn takes a corner!

SIDEWALK PROPHETS

Sidewalk Prophets has a new album coming out at the end of this month, for one. Their third disc, 'Something Different,' released on Fervent Records, is ex-



pected to be their most diverse recording to date. Founding members Ben McDonald and David Frey also took a different approach to producing the album, as they spent their time writing and recording in a cabin on a lake in Pennsylvania instead of a studio in, say, Nashville.

"All these things were happening in our lives at that time but here we sat, on the peaceful serenity of this lake," Frey said, "It was a different way to approach writing. Instead of a clock-in and clock-out ap-

proach to writing, we were in the moment, in this environment for days on end asking God to fill the quiet but remove the distractions and burdens, and allow Him to speak through us."

"This is the most proud I've ever been to make music," McDonald said. "We've poured everything we have into this project. I feel like I was put on earth to make this record."

Something Different will be available August 28. Check it out at sidewalkprophets.com.

AARON SHUST

Another release August 28 will be com-



ing from Dove Award winner (and old college buddy) Aaron Shust "Doxology," recorded in Nashville and produced by Christian Paschall (David Crowder Band's drummer), will contain 10 new songs by Shust. Following four years of personal struggle, while two of his sons dealt with illnesses, the album is a celebration of God's grace.

"In the first chapter of Job," Shust explains, "we see that Job was able to worship even in the midst of his grief, but he wasn't ready to celebrate yet. I can relate to that."

The album is also a reflection of his new role as music leader at his home church in Pittsburgh. "I have always been a part of the local church, and my new album Doxology is inspired by my time leading worship in the church. A doxology is a liturgy of praise to God, like a short exaltation at the end of a New Testament letter, or a

song sung at the end of a church service."

For more info visit aaronshust.com.

REND COLLECTIVE



As if that wasn't enough, Rend Collective will also be releasing a new set of songs, although this release will be coming out August 21. "As Family We Go" will have eleven new tracks, with a deluxe edition including two additional songs, two remixes and a ukulele version of one of their classics.

"Part of the title comes from the fact that we always have considered ourselves less as a band, and more like a family," the band posted on their site, recently, "We pray as a family, work as a family, and do ministry as a family."

The band has also asked fans to share their family stories and photos, prayer requests and encouragement, using #AsFamilyWeGo and tagging Rend Collective. New stories will be updated on a daily

basis. "But more importantly, we belong to a larger family, and that family includes you"

Rend Collective's fifth album is now available for preorder at iTunes, and has released their first new single for purchase. They will also be continuing touring with Chris Tomlin on his Love Ran Red Tour. For info visit rendcollective.com.

JASON CRABB

Next up, Jason Crabb has announced his newest release, 'Whatever the Road,' will be coming to us mid-September. The GRAMMY and Dove Award winner's fifth solo album is also his first release with Reunion Records. Produced by Jason Ingram and Paul Mabury, 'Whatever the Road' will come with ten new tracks.



UPCOMING

Vertical Church Band and Meredith Andrews—August 6, Harvest Bible Chapel

Twenty One Pilots—September 22, Starlight Theater

MercyMe—Oct 30, First Baptist of Raytown

BOOK

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ities and powers and rulers of the dark places" in the book of Ephesians, and Graham said he sees that battle in the culture wars of America today.

"I'm praying that God will use this book to wake us up to this war," he said. "Because you and in particular your family is in the killing zone.... The more you love Jesus and serve Him, the more you will find yourself in the battle."

For believers, facing these unseen forces is inevitable, Graham said.

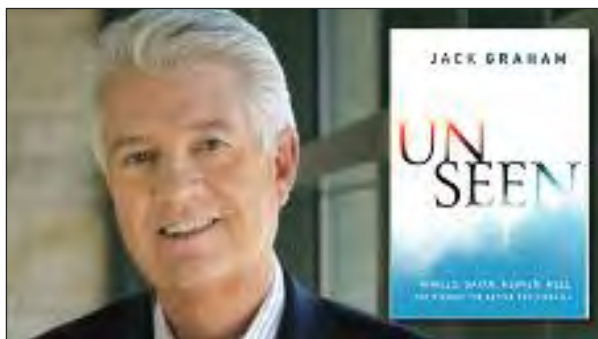
"Life for the Christian is not a playground, it is a battleground," he noted. "And if we are faithful followers of Jesus, then we will face the flak, we will face the fire in our lives. Satan shows up every time we show up with the Gospel."

While Americans share a fascination for the supernatural—from angels to superheroes—people tend to tuck those into the world of entertainment and fantasy.

Preaching the reality of the unseen world and all that is at stake in the battle is a far more difficult quest.

But Graham says it is crucial, and the rewards are beyond our imaginations. He offers the testimony of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, as a great hope for believers.

As Stephen was stoned in the presence of Saul of Tarsus, battered with huge stones and rocks, Graham said "he's looking up into heaven and he said ... 'I see Jesus standing! I see the glory of Jesus at



the right hand of the throne, standing!"

"He looked beyond this world into the unseen world that is very, very real. It's all around us. But by faith, with the eyes of his heart, he looked into heaven, and in his suffering, in his dying, he sees Jesus, standing!"

bookbriefs

ABOUT THE BIBLE IN POP CULTURE

Kevin Harvey

Thomas Nelson

With razor-sharp wit and spot-on observations about Christianity in modern culture, Kevin Harvey delivers a critical commentary that's as entertaining as it is thought provoking. Making it clear he's not endorsing pop culture as theological foundation, he identifies Biblical themes, ideas and principles from films (Noah, Son of God, The Avengers, Spider-Man, etc.), television (such as Lost and reality-based shows), and music (Christina Perri, Mumford & Sons, etc.). While some of the analogies may seem a bit of a stretch, Harvey's recurrent observations are sound. Because of their display of human emotion, depravity, and the God-created need for a Savior, the aforementioned examples have mass appeal and often conjure spiritual thought despite the creator's intentions. The takeaway for Christians is that the proliferation of Biblical ideas, portrayed accurately or not, has value as a conversation starter. As Harvey implies, pop-culture offers partial truths and it does ask poignant questions. However, it's up to the church to deliver the whole truth.

—Caroline Lusk



HILLSONG

continued from page 18

Artist category ahead of the release of their fourth studio album, Empires.

Joel previously stated that while the accolades are gratifying, the band's purpose has always extended far beyond industry recognition.

"I feel like this award belongs to the many in our church and others around the world who faithfully give their time and energy week in week out, often behind the scenes and with no desire for accolade or applause," Joel said in May. "If anything these songs and whatever they achieve are the overflow of that spirit to simply serve God and serve others."

He also shared that the band's goal is never to write "cool" music, but rather to share the incredible story of Jesus.

"I'm not trying to write songs that are cool or hip or that keep up to date with whatever is out there on the radio," he said. "We're genuinely just trying to write songs that are honest reflections of a creative God and music that helps people connect with God."

Hillsong, which is headquartered in Sydney, has churches around the world with more than 100,000 weekly attendees, including thriving congregations in New York and Los Angeles. An estimated 50 million people sing their songs every Sunday.

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What makes grace so amazing?



ERIC METAXAS

Author and radio personality for Breakpoint

viewpoint

"Amazing Grace" is arguably the best-known and most-sung hymn in America—maybe the world. It has deep meaning for millions, across all races and backgrounds, and has long united and comforted our nation in times of sorrow. On any given Sunday, there are thousands of congregations singing it, even 236 years after it was published. But lately, it's made something of a comeback—if that's even possible for such an immortal song.

The strains of "Amazing Grace" took on a voice few Americans were expecting in June when President Obama visited Charleston, South Carolina, to honor the nine victims of the Emanuel AME Church shooting. After delivering a moving eulogy, Obama did something few presidents have ever done: He broke into that timeless first verse, sung with the traditional, lilting style of black gospel choirs. As he sang, a tearful crowd of clergy, parishioners, and members of the community sang along with him.

Now, I've certainly had my disagreements with this president, but what he did in Charleston was profoundly appropriate and moving. In fact, I did it with him at the end of the 2012 National Prayer Breakfast. And I've got to tell you, it is hard



not to tear up watching it—especially in light of the supernatural forgiveness members of Emanuel AME Church showed Dylann Roof, the shooter who killed their friends and family just a few weeks ago.

Whether that young man received it or not, he was offered amazing grace. And I can't think of a more fitting tribute to the lives lost or to the God who saves wretches, than that hymn.

But Obama's wasn't the only performance of "Amazing Grace" this summer. Former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice displayed some of her own talent last week, playing the hymn on the piano alongside violinist Jenny Oaks. The beautiful video, which I hope you'll watch, was released over the 4th of July, and features black-and-white footage of American service members during World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam. "Condi" and Oaks played marvelously, but I have to say, it was once again "Amazing Grace" itself

that stole the show.

And it isn't just political figures revisiting this timeless hymn. As I wrote back in October, the story of its author is now a musical, and it's easily one of the best productions of my lifetime. Through outstanding performances, it tells the story behind the immortal words—the life, the sins, and the conversion of a wretch named John Newton, the 18th-century British slave captain whom God transformed into a minister and abolitionist.

And as someone who wrote a biography of Newton's spiritual son, William Wilberforce, I found myself moved beyond words at this depiction of Christ's power to turn even the darkest life around—and use it to change the world. It's nothing less than a presentation of the Gospel in action—and on Broadway, no less!

Now what strikes me about this sudden and unexpected revival of "Amazing

■ See GRACE page 22

Polls show less support for same-sex marriage



MICHAEL J. NEW

Political science professor at University of Michigan-Dearborn

viewpoint

Within the past couple weeks, three separate national polls have been conducted on the issue of same-sex marriage. Interestingly, each of these three polls shows a decline in support for it. Both Ipsos/Reuters and Gallup conducted polls in early July — just days after the Supreme Court handed its ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*. Both polls found a slight decline in the percentage of Americans who support same-sex marriage as compared to previous polls that each firm conducted earlier this spring.

Additionally, a third poll by the AP found that only 42 percent of Americans support same-sex marriage. This is a decline of 6 points from the organization's last poll on the issue in April. It also found a significant increase in percentage of people — 59 percent in June vs. only 52 percent in April — who said wedding-related businesses with religious objections should be allowed to refuse service to gay and lesbian couples.

These findings are more significant than many observers realize. Historically, Supreme Court rulings tend legitimize certain policies in the eyes of the public — for instance, good data from the General Social Survey indicates that there were gains in support for legal abortion after the *Roe v. Wade* decision. It is interesting that support for same sex marriage did not increase in the days after the *Obergefell* decision.

Another interesting takeaway from the Associated Press poll is that many Americans remain undecided on the issue. When asked, "Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose allowing same-sex couples to be legally married in your state?" 31 percent of respondents said that they neither support nor oppose same-sex marriage. Several previous AP polls report similar findings. This indicates that despite the Supreme Court's ruling, a high percentage of Americans are still open to persuasion. Advocates of traditional marriage would do well to continue the flight.

—Michael J. New is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and an associate scholar at the Charlotte Lozier

Sexually tolerant culture



CLINT DECKER

President and Evangelist with Great Awakenings, Inc.

hopefortoday

Clay Center, Kan.— Depending on your view point America is either evolving into a greater and more tolerant society or nose diving into moral oblivion. Gradually, behaviors once thought socially taboo are now societal norms. Fornication is two unmarried people who are sexually active. Once there were laws on the books that were enforced to deter such a lifestyle. The same goes for co-habitation, homosexuality and adultery. One by one these laws have been reversed or no longer enforced. As a re-

sult, pornography, incest, sexual trafficking, prostitution, rape have become dangerous and perverted spin offs of our sexually tolerant culture. Truly we are living in the most sexualized period of American and world history.

This new reality does not negate the eternal truth of choices and consequences. Yes, millions celebrate as our nation, along with many others, progress morally. However, my heart fears the coming day when the price must be paid for the moral path we have taken and then, cheers of joy will become tears of sorrow.

I make a call for people to turn to Jesus and away from the rising tide of these new moral norms. The legality, societal acceptance, and persuasive argument for them can easily sway you and me to go-along and join the swelling crowd.

Jesus once spoke of the wide and narrow roads, both with very different

journeys and destinations. He said, "The gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matthew 7:13-14). The wide road is filled with crowds pleasuring themselves without restraint. The narrow road has few people because it is hard to turn away from the strong worldly appeals and walk in holiness before God. Even so, for those who persevere, the reward is eternal life.

What path do you choose? If you want real, lasting life, then pack up and send off your old ways. However, realize it cannot be done on mere resolve with temptation all around. You need to start with a new heart and mind. Only Jesus, through His death and resurrection can give you the change and power to become a new man or woman. Call on Him in faith right now and may He be your hope for today.

Clint Decker is President & Evangelist with Great Awakenings, Inc. cdecker@greatawakenings.org

■ VAUGHN

continued from page 17

ture health.

Children are our future. We are already seeing record levels of sickness and disease in our youth, and the biggest reason is poor nutrition. You have the opportunity to sow into your children and future generations through life giving foods provided by God.

—Vaughn Lawrence is a natural health care practitioner, herbalist and owner of Spirit of Health who lives by their motto: "We Love God. We Love People. We Love Health. www.spiritofhealthkc.com

■ GRACE

continued from page 21

Grace" and the story behind it is just how appropriate it is in America today. Look, I understand we Christians try to be positive, but there's a lot of discouraging stuff going on in America right now. If ever a nation was lost and in need of finding, or blind and in need of sight, it's ours in 2015.

The reason I'm overjoyed to see "Amazing Grace" getting so much attention and uniting so

many in moments of sorrow—the reason I'm thrilled that the story behind the hymn is on stage in America's biggest theaters—is that we need God's grace just as much as John Newton did. And as Newton himself would no doubt remind us, it's the story of the One Who offers us that grace that deserves to be sung again and again.

Eric Metaxas is currently the voice of Breakpoint, a radio commentary (www.breakpoint.org)

■ RODRIGUEZ

continued from page 1

Current events in the last several weeks have been dramatic enough for some Christian leaders to warn that a course correction for the church is needed.

But are enough pastors and influencers in the community of believers speaking publicly about this apparent accelerated ride toward the irrelevance of Christians in America?

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez is speaking in truth and not holding back. Rodriguez, someone CNN and Fox named the leader of the Hispanic evangelical movement, lives to "advance the Lamb's agenda" and warn about the country's move away from morality.

"To engage a biblical narrative as a metaphor, as Christians, as it pertains to cultural acceptance and governmental affirmation, we no

longer live in Jerusalem; we now live in Babylon," Rodriguez explains. "We live in the midst of opposition and hostility. We live in the midst of threats and persecution."

While his sermon as a guest speaker at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., is primarily evangelistic, he has been traveling around the country to share how silence is not an option for Christians. He further explained how "today's complacency is tomorrow's captivity."

"As a nation we have never been under the canopy of darkness that we presently find ourselves. In the past six weeks it has been almost surreal," Rodriguez said. "It goes beyond [the Supreme Court]. Yes, SCOTUS redefining marriage; yes, the subsequent attacks on religious liberty; yes, Planned Parenthood and the video of selling of baby parts, you name it; it's almost surreal.

"It's eerie and apocalyptic. ... It's to the point where people don't want to turn on the television set if you're a Christ follower... We can't be silent about issues that impact Christendom. ... We need to speak truth with love."

If a state of Babylon is not evident now for some, it will be in a matter of just a year or two, according to Rodriguez.

"The church will become a marginalized religious threat in America — irrelevant, no longer prophetic. And we will be satisfied having gatherings in a self-preservation society sort of modus operandi and no longer relevant for speaking into the corporate sphere or the culture or society," he said.

"The church will be marginalized to a great degree, if not persecuted; we will be under the threat of persecution, and that's the reality.

This is what will happen if Christians continue to acquiesce, if we continue to ignore the fact that elections have consequences — that it's not about politics. As a Christian we have a moral responsibility to vote by biblical world-views."

Unfortunately, he added, the church in America has never been more passive, more complacent, and more politically correct than now.

"There are two reasons why Christian leaders or the pastors would be silent, theologically speaking: sin and fear," Rodriguez said.

"Whenever there is sin, because we lack the moral imperative or authority, we are quiet. Sin removes or dilutes or hinders any sort of moral authority. And the other thing is that there's fear of losing followers, fear of losing income, fear of attracting negative media, being called names."

He continued, "We can't drink the Kool-Aid that it's all love. We can love people to Hell if we don't share truth."

Rodriguez calls out the church for what he labels "This sort of hippie-ish, 1960s motif. This is not Berkley, and this whole sort of collective Berkley church marijuana smoking, pass one, let's just be happy, up, up and away, you know, in that beautiful balloon ... that's not the Gospel. The Gospel is truth with love."

He said, instead, he believes

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■ POVERTY

continued from page 3

not working—a number now approaching 100 million. In addition, to make the unemployment rate artificially low, the government has moved millions onto government welfare in an effort to keep them out of the official num-

bers.

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