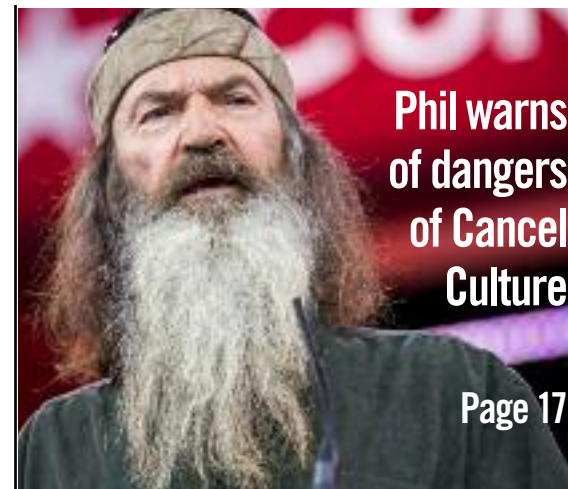




SAVANNA CHESTNUT AT VINEWOOD | Page 13

metro VOICE

FREE!
TAKE ONE!



Phil warns of dangers of Cancel Culture

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NEW RESIDENT churchguide



See inside back cover!

Kansas Prayer Breakfast moves to new venue



The Kansas Prayer Breakfast is back with an in-person event featuring Statewide leaders in government, business, education and industry on hand – but this year at a new venue. Now held at Fellowship Bible Church, 6800 SW 10th Avenue, on Wednesday, March 16th, this will be for the 60th celebration of the annual event. Breakfast is served at 6:30 a.m., and the program begins at 7 a.m.

This year's featured speakers will be Rod Handley and Damion Cooper.

Rod Handley is the Founder & President of Character that Counts, a ministry established in 2000. Rod speaks all across the nation to men, women and teenagers about character, integrity and accountability issues. He has written over 30 books including "Character Counts: Who's Counting Yours?" From 1986-1999, he served on the staff of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, including 11 years as the COO/CFO. He has also spoken at hundreds of chapel services for a number of NFL, NBA and MLB teams, including serving as team chaplain for the Kansas City Royals (1995-2009) and the Seattle SuperSonics

■ Please see PRAYER page 2



By Dennis Prager

As of this moment, America is still a beacon of liberty.

Under the pretext of public health, the soul of what is known as the Free West has left most Western countries. Looking at the government overreach and abuses of power in virtually every other Western nation, one can only conclude that America truly is the last free man standing.

Here is a rundown of the recent suppression of liberty in major

Western countries.

CANADA

Let's start with our neighbor to the north. Canada is one of the least free countries in the Western world. In some ways it is the least free. In every area of life, including freedom of speech, Canada severely restricts its citizens' rights. Canada is one of the only countries in the world that bans the unvaccinated from all public transportation — airplanes, trains and buses. And no Canadian home

can entertain more than three non-household visitors — a ban that prevented families and friends from getting together for Christmas.

Canada is a moral embarrassment. But apparently most Canadians are perfectly content to live in a country moving toward dictatorship.

They should replace the maple leaf on the Canadian flag with a sheep.

EUROPE

In the summer of 2021, most

■ Please see LIBERTY page 2

Doorstep Celebrates Fifty-five Years with Matching Challenge



On June 8, 1966, a tornado roared through Topeka, killing 17 people and injuring hundreds. The cost of property damage was \$100 million. One of the agencies helping people in need during the aftermath was a six-month old agency named "Doorstep," which at that time consisted of six area churches.

Doorstep grew from this humble beginning, and now has 52 interfaith member congregations working together to provide emergency aid to those in need - food, clothing, household goods, rent and utility assistance, dental and prescription assistance, as well as help with local transportation. Through its history, Doorstep has helped more than 407,000 households, which includes more than 970,000 individuals. From a tornado in 1966 to a pandemic in 2021, for the past

■ Please see DOORSTEP page 3

Barry Feaker, Executive Director at TRM, to step down

Topeka Rescue Mission Executive Director Barry Feaker is stepping down after leading the agency for 36 years.

"I think it's great timing for the next generation to come in to build upon the platforms, the foundations that we've set here in this community," Feaker said.

TRM announced La Manda Broyles will succeed Feaker as executive director. Broyles joined TRM in June 2021 as senior director of ministry operations. Prior to that, she was a principal in Topeka Public Schools and a volunteer TRM board member.

"I am honored to serve the TRM family and Topeka community as TRM's next Executive Director," Broyles said. "Being a vessel for the Lord's work on Earth to bring hope to others is something that is

deeply rooted in my heart."

Feaker will continue to serve TRM as a strategic advisor. He will also remain involved in community engagement initiatives and advocacy, and he plans to consult on a nationwide level for communities and organizations that have reached out to TRM and Topeka as a model for addressing homelessness issues.

"I am very excited about the future of TRM," Feaker said. "La Manda is a visionary leader who will ensure the heart and core of the Mission remain focused on serving those in need while sharing the love of Jesus Christ to all."

Feaker started at the mission April 21, 1986. He was the only full-time staff

■ Please see FEAKER page 2



The cost of driving in Kansas is rising with no end in sight

The prices Kansans are paying for gas are close to a dollar more than a year ago. Prices rose 20-30 cents the day after Russia invaded Ukraine.

Experts fear the conflict between Russia and Ukraine could severely disrupt oil supplies in the region, which would lead to even larger increases in gas prices. Russia is the second-largest oil producer in the world, behind the U.S.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, as of 2020, Russia contributed about 7% of gross petroleum imports to the U.S.

Other countries from which the U.S. imports oil include Canada and OPEC, which comprises several countries, including Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.

The U.S. could see gas prices go up as high as \$4 by early spring, and markets like California and Hawaii — where gas is

already expensive — could top \$5.

But these numbers aren't even the extent of the problem. When fossil fuels get expensive, their rising costs can propagate through the rest of the economy. In the past few months, companies have complained that high oil and natural-gas prices are raising the cost of shipping goods (because trucks, ships, and planes burn fuels), packaging them (because plastic uses crude oil as a chemical feedstock), and even growing new food (because fertilizer is made with natural gas). Some of these higher costs ultimately flow to consumers as rising prices across the board.

In the meantime, finding the cheapest gas prices isn't the only way to save money on gas. AAA recommends other ways to make sure you're using as little gasoline as possible.

Be sure your car is properly maintained.

A faulty oxygen sensor in your engine can wipe out 40% of your fuel economy. After a proper tune-up, drivers see an average of 4% increases in fuel efficiency.

Inflate your car tires to the maximum safe limit specified by your vehicle manufacturer. Underinflated car tires may provide a slightly more smooth ride, but at the expense of lower fuel efficiency. For every 1 PSI under the recommended maximum limit, you lose 0.2% of your gas mileage.

Get the correct motor oil. The wrong motor oil can reduce gas mileage and gas



savings by 1-2%, li

Change or clean your air filters! The difference in fuel economy between a new air filter and a clogged air filter was a whopping 14% drag on your gas mileage.

must show a health pass to enter nightclubs and other venues.

Wales went even further, allowing a maximum of six people to meet in pubs, cinemas and restaurants. Nightclubs were simply closed as of Dec. 27. Mandatory six-foot social distancing came into effect in offices from the same date. People must work from home unless it is impossible to do so.

While England does not yet have the same lockdown rules as Wales and Scotland, throughout the U.K. one must show a health pass certifying vaccination — or had a negative COVID-19 test within the past 72 hours or had COVID-19 under six months earlier — in order to enter most public locations.

THE UNITED STATES

And then there is the United States of America. With states like Florida and most other Republican-governed states, we have the freest places in the Western world. Going from Canada or Western Europe to Florida is like going from Romania or Poland to Western Europe during the Cold War. Indeed, going from most Democrat-run cities to most Republican-run cities is also like passing through the Iron Curtain.

Thanks to its conservative half and thanks to the Founders' genius of defanging the national government by giving states great power, America remains the beacon of liberty it was when Lincoln said, "America is the last best hope of Earth" when France gave us the Statue of Liberty. If it were up to the Left, America would be as unfree as Canada or Austria. That's why fighting the Left is the most important thing any American who cherishes liberty can do.

LIBERTY

continued from page 1

European countries introduced the so-called health pass or "European COVID-19 Pass." This digital pass, in the form of a QR code, is a prerequisite to access cafes, bars, restaurants, theaters and even long-distance transport. Only the naive can now deny that the real goal of the EU has long been a digital identity system for all European citizens.

NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands is among the least free countries in the West.

From Dec. 19, the Dutch must: Stay at home as much as possible; receive no more than two visitors per day; be with no more than one other person outdoors; and work from home.

In addition, restaurants, cafes and bars and nonessential shops are all closed.

Nor do the Dutch have the right to protest these draconian restrictions. Recently, an anti-lockdown protest was banned by the leftist mayor of Amsterdam, Femke Halsema, because people would "not be adhering to social distancing rules." Thousands of people nevertheless showed up. They were met with drones, water cannons and huge numbers of police. Footage capturing a police dog biting down on a peaceful protester's arm has gone viral.

FRANCE

Working from home became compulsory for those who can.

French Prime Minister Jean Castex said, "Even if we do not yet see hospitals as overloaded by omicron, the contagiousness of the variant and the speed at which it is spreading require us to go further."

And the country has had a "health pass" since last summer, which only allows the vaccinated, those who have a negative COVID-19 test result from within 24 hours, or who had COVID-19 to enter cafes, restaurants, museums, cinemas and other public places. So, too, wearing a mask is compulsory throughout the country for everyone aged 11 and over in enclosed spaces and on public transport, on pain of a fine. Accordingly, consumption of food and drink is banned on public transport — including long-distance trains.

In schools, wearing a mask is compulsory from the age of 6, including in out-



A disabled woman was trampled by mounted police officers in Ottawa

door areas of the school.

AUSTRIA

Austria competes with the Netherlands for the title of Western Europe's least free country.

From Nov. 22 to Dec. 12 no one was allowed to leave their home except for specific reasons such as buying groceries, going to the doctor or exercising. The lockdown has continued for the more than 30% of Austrians who remain unvaccinated.

In other words, nearly a third of all Austrians have not been allowed to leave their homes since Nov. 22 and will not be allowed to do so for the foreseeable future.

It is about to get much worse. Austria is about to become the first country in the world that will make the COVID-19 vaccine compulsory. It will be illegal to be unvaccinated. Beginning Feb. 1, unvaccinated Austrians will be fined 200 euros every month, and the fine will be increased every time they are caught in any activity outside of their house. Germany has already stated it wants to follow suit.

AUSTRALIA

Australia placed most of its citizens under house arrest for much of 2021. Sydney, Australia's most populous city, was locked down for 106 days, ending only on Nov. 15. And Melbourne, the country's second largest city, described by the Voice of America on Oct. 21 as "officially the world's most locked down city," was locked down 260 days. Residents were prohibited from traveling more than

five kilometers from their homes, visiting family or friends, entering supermarkets except for pickup, and attending funerals. Schools were, and remain, still closed, and international travel was, and remains, prohibited. Needless to say, all shops, bars, and restaurants were closed. Essentially, people were prohibited from leaving their homes for a third of a year.

NEW ZEALAND

The lockdowns in New Zealand rendered that formerly free country essentially a totalitarian state in 2021. Befitting a totalitarian state, New Zealand's prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, actually said at one point regarding COVID-19 information, "Unless you hear it from the government, it is not true." The woman, a bona fide fanatic, locked down her entire country because one person had the delta variant. Even pro-lockdown CNN seemed to find this a bit over-the-top. It headlined on Aug. 17: "New Zealand announces it's locking down the entire country ... over one Covid case."

GERMANY

At the beginning of December, Germany announced a lockdown on the unvaccinated. They were banned from restaurants and bars, movie theaters, gyms, nonessential shops, and Christmas markets. About a quarter of all Germans are unvaccinated.

UNITED KINGDOM

Scotland has banned spectators, even if vaccinated, from attending sporting events. Masks must be worn indoors at public venues such as nightclubs, and one

PRAYER

continued from page 1

(1986-89). Rod and his wife Jenna live in Lee's Summit, MO and they have four children (ages 21-28). www.characterthatcounts.org

On July 1, 2021, Damion Cooper launched Kollektive Company under the umbrella of Character that Counts. He previously served as the Youth Pastor at GracePointe Church in Lee's Summit. Damion's vision is "Reaching the ONE" through love, risk and cultural relativity. It exists to inspire the next generation, to transform leaders and businesses, and advance God's Kingdom. Damion and his wife Krista have two young daughters and they live in Lee's Summit, MO. www.kollektiveco.com

The Kansas Prayer Breakfast is held in March each year, and is patterned after the National Prayer Breakfast, which began in 1953 in Washington, D.C., under the leadership of Kansas Senator Frank Carlson and President Dwight Eisenhower. The Kansas version began in 1962 with the aid and encouragement of Governor John Anderson. Carlson was the first keynote speaker.

Tickets for the breakfast are \$20.00 per person. For reservations or more information go to www.kansasprayerbreakfast.org. Virtual attendance via zoom is also available at no cost. The event is sponsored by Topeka Fellowship, Inc.

FEAKER

continued from page 1

member at the time, compared to a staff of around 80 today.

Under his tenure, TRM has grown from sheltering 15 to 20 people a night, to more than 300 a night pre-pandemic, and nearly 150 today.

TRM also has partnered with community agencies to enact programs for education, job training, rehousing, street outreach, and human trafficking intervention. For several years, TRM led the NETReach program, focused on empowering the HiCrest neighborhood. During the pandemic, TRM's Operation Food Secure facilitated food box distribution. Most recently, the Mobile Access Partnership with Valeo, Topeka Police, Stormont Vail, and Valeo brings shower, laundry, and health care to those in need.

Broyles spent 12 years working in education, with the past four being as an administrator in Topeka USD 501, before transitioning to TRM. She and her husband, Jared Broyles, founded and operate Foster the Cause, a nonprofit foster care and adoption organization. They have two children.

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7th Annual EasterFest returns to Garfield Park

Topkea EasterFest – The Topeka Easter Parade and Fun Fair – is back for 2022! The annual event began in Gage Park in 2014, then moved to Garfield Park in North Topeka in 2017. After being cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, the 7th Annual EasterFest will be held Saturday, April 16, 2022 (the day before Easter), with a parade on North Kansas Avenue that runs right past Garfield Park, followed by an egg hunt and fun fair.



Over three thousand people have attended the event in the past to watch the parade, visit the Fun Fair, listen to live music, visit over 70 vendor & exhibit booths, attend the Health Fair and take part in the big egg hunt or other activities.

Again this year the Easter Parade will be on North Kansas Avenue, from NOTO Arts District to Garfield Park, followed by the Big Egg Hunt in the Garfield Park playground area. From 10am to 3pm, vendor booths, food trucks and kid's activities will be happening all over Garfield Park, inside the shelterhouse and inside the gym. This year, even more churches, non-profit organizations, schools and local businesses are expected to enter floats and marching bands, etc., in the parade, as well as set up activity booths at the fun fair.

Every year, dozens of churches, businesses and non-profit organizations take part in the parade, and dozens more set up vendor booths and kids' games as part of the family fun fair. There have been lots of floats with a variety of themes, and all shapes and sizes of other vehicles, as well as walking entries such as schools, military groups, marching bands and more. The event is coordinated by C5Alive, a Christian leadership offshoot of the Capital City Christian Chamber of Commerce (C5).

"We've had a great response and new entries each year at EasterFest," said Kevin Doel, one of the organizers. "I expect it to just keep growing every year."

The Family Fun Fair will consist of activities geared toward children and families, as well as health & wellness vendor booths, vendor exhibits, and more. Live performers will be on hand all day, such as jazz bands, dance troupes, praise bands, solo artists, street entertainers, health & fitness demonstrators and more.

Back are the ever-popular cupcake walks, along with face painting, petting zoo and food trucks.

There is still room for more EasterFest sponsors and participants for the Vendor Market, Entertainment Stage, Food Court and Health Fair. Volunteers are also needed to help with the entire event.

Major sponsors for EasterFest 2022 include Integrity Insurance, Peggy Beasterfeld Tax & Accounting, Metro Voice News, Health & Wellness Magazine, The Pad Restaurant, Golden Eagle Casino, SERVPRO, Capital City Flooring, Patton & Patton, Davidson's Funeral Home and more.

For more information, visit www.TopekaEasterParade.com, email info@C5Alive.org or call 785-640-6399. You can also find updates at Topeka EasterFest 2022 on Facebook.

Celebrate Recovery at C5Alive POWER Luncheon

The monthly C5Alive POWER Luncheon will be held March 10, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at The Peak, 1930 SW Gage. The featured speaker will be Huston Thompson.

Thompson leads Celebrate Recovery and has a huge heart for the hurting, broken, and bruised in the Topeka community.

Commerce (C5), an organization founded in 2009, dedicated to developing and uniting Christian Leadership in the community, involving businesses, non-profits and churches.

In addition to monthly "POWER" luncheons held on the second Thursday of each month, C5 also hosts periodic business fairs and other events, including EASTERFEST, the annual Topeka Easter Parade and Family Fun Fest, held on N. Kansas Avenue and in Garfield Park on the day before Easter.



Thompson

The cost to attend a C5 luncheon is \$10 for C5Alive members and first-time guests who RSVP, and \$12 at the door. Non-members and repeat guests pay \$15. C5 luncheons are open to the public and everyone is welcome to attend, organizers said. RSVPs and inquiries can be sent to info@C5Alive.org.

C5Alive "POWER" luncheons are held on the second Thursday of each month. The next monthly C5Alive "POWER Luncheon" will be held April 14.

For more details on these and other events, stay tuned to the C5Alive facebook page and website: www.C5Alive.org.

C5Alive is part of the Capital City Christian Chamber of

This year's event will be on April 16, listed on Facebook as Topeka EasterFest 2022.

The group will also host a Fall Fest for the second consecutive year on October 8 at The Vinewood venue.

C5 members may also sponsor luncheons and other events as a way to promote their organizations.

For more information about C5, go to C5Alive.org, facebook.com/C5Alive, or call 785-640-6399.

DOORSTEP

continued from page 1

55 years, Doorstep has been there for our neighbors in need.

Doorstep is now in the midst of a year-long 55th Anniversary Celebration, celebrating all that has been accomplished over the years, and seeking "to invite, involve, include, and inspire people to participate in Doorstep's mission," according to Lisa Cain, Executive Director.

"We want to thank all those who have been faithful supporters over the years," Cain said. "We could not have accomplished anything without your support.



We give thanks for the support we have received from religious organizations, civic organizations; support we have received from federal and local governmental agencies; as well as the support we have received from local businesses and



corporate sponsors. And we give thanks for members of the media, who tell the wider community about what we do to make Topeka a great place to live!"

Doorstep has started a "55th Anniversary Fund" and seeks to raise funds for its assistance programs, capital improvements, an endowment fund, and operating expenses. For example, Doorstep currently has a heating/cooling system that is more than 60 years old.

"We are seeking to replace that system, before it completely quits, with a more energy-efficient system that will help us to reduce our monthly utility bills," Cain said. "The savings in utility costs can be re-allocated to help those in need."

Running through April 15, Doorstep has a Matching Funds Challenge that you can take advantage of. A generous couple has pledged \$20,000 towards Doorstep's HVAC replacement fund. For every \$2 you donate, the matching funders will add \$1 to that donation.

If you would like to contribute, checks may be made payable to "Doorstep, Inc." and note on the memo line "For 55th Anniversary HVAC Matching Fund." Gifts may be mailed or brought to Doorstep, Inc., 1119 SW 10th, Topeka, KS 66604. You can also donate by visiting www.doorsteptopeka.org/Donate.

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HVAC Matching Funds Challenge



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Make a donation towards Doorstep's 55th Anniversary HVAC Fund during the Match Challenge dates, and our generous anonymous donors will match your donation!

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We currently have \$95,500 secured towards our goal of \$180,000 to replace our 60+ year old HVAC system!

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Mail your matching funds donation to:

Doorstep, Inc., 1119 SW 10th, Topeka, Ks 66604

Visit www.DoorstepTopeka.org :

Use PayPal ~ Donate Tab. Note: HVAC Match.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

What's a zero-based budget?

Dear Dave,

I have a good job and make pretty good money, but I'm tired of always worrying about my finances and being strapped for cash at the end of the month. I've heard you talk about getting out of debt and living on a zero-based budget, but what exactly is a zero-based budget?
Edward

Dear Edward,

The concept of a zero-based budget is simple: income minus outgo equals zero. If you bring home \$4,000 a month, you want everything you spend, save, give and invest to equal \$4,000. That way, you know where every one of your dollars is going. Not knowing where the money's going is what kills lots of people's financial dreams. They think they know how much they're spending and where it's going, but they really don't. Here's how you do it. List all your income sources for the month. Your income should include paychecks, small-business income, side jobs, residual income, child support and so on. If it's money that comes into your household's bank account, write it down and add it up.

Next, list every single expense you have each month — rent, food, cable, phones and everything in between. Your expenses vary from one month to the next, and this is why you make a new budget each month. Your giving budget might be high in December when Christmas rolls around. The car budget will spike during months when you pay insurance or renew your tags. Focus on one month at a time.

Now, subtract your expenses from your income. Ideally, this number will be zero. It might take a few months of practice, so don't worry if it doesn't balance out immediately. If it doesn't, it just means you need to do something to bring one of the numbers up, the other one down—or both. If you're spending more than you make, you need to make



**DAVE
RAMSEY**

Financial author,
radio host, television
personality, and
motivational speaker

davesays

some cuts in your spending. If you need to generate more money, get a part-time job or sell a bunch of stuff.

The deal with a zero-based budget is this: every dollar must have a name. That means every dollar has a designated job to do. If you fill out every item in your budget and come out \$100 ahead — meaning you have nothing for that \$100 to do — you haven't finished your budget. You have to find a job for that \$100. It's your decision what it does, but if you don't give it a name and purpose, you'll end up blowing it and wondering where it went.

Good luck, Edward!

-Dave

What are your views on teaching children good work habits?

Dear Dave,

What are your views on teaching children good work habits? Many of our friends don't require their kids to help out or work around the house, but we both strongly feel that instilling a strong work ethic early in life is one of the best things you can do as a parent for your children.

Deshay

Dear Deshay,

I'm so glad you both feel that way. Our culture has made many great advances to ensure the happiness and well-being of children. But too many parents today are so centered on what their children want that they have lost perspective on what their children need.

Perspective, or looking at life over

time, demands that you teach children to work. Teaching a child to work is not child abuse. We teach them to work not for our benefit, but because it gives them dignity in a job well done today and the tools and character to win as adults in the future.

In my mind, children should be

taught to work — just like you'd teach them to bathe or brush their teeth — as a necessary life skill. An adult who has no clue how to tackle a job and finish it with pride is every bit as debilitated as an adult with body odor or green teeth. If your child graduates from high school, and his or her only skill set consists of playing video games, eating fast food and believing the world owes them something, you've set up your child to fail.

Another benefit of teaching a child the wonder of work is they may grow to lose a little respect for those who refuse

to work. I'm not talking about folks who lost jobs due to unforeseen circumstances and are trying to get back on their feet, or someone who genuinely cannot work. I'm talking about folks who refuse to look for or accept, gainful employment.

My wife and I noticed that our kids, as they grew older, didn't pursue relationships with people who didn't understand the value of work and demonstrate the character traits of mature, hardworking people. And that was wonderful news to us!

—Dave

The Trouble with Trillions

By Ryan Shumaker
Smartvestor Pro at
The Retirement Team



Since the pandemic began, we've had 3 different stimulus bills

that far exceed by multiple amounts any other stimulus measure in history as well as the largest ever infrastructure bill all passed. The current running total between these pieces of legislation exceeds \$5 trillion in aid. Former Senator Dirksen once said, "a billion here, a billion there, pretty soon it adds up to real money;" real money that taxpayers will eventually have to repay. While there are only a few letters separating million, billion and trillion, there's a significant difference between them. To try and conceptualize the difference, let's talk about it in number of seconds. If you were to start a timer a million seconds would be about eleven and a half days. A billion? 32 years. A trillion? 32,000 years. That is not a typo. The difference between a million, billion, and trillion is the difference between eleven and a half days, 32 years and 32,000 years.

While this is staggering when put in the context of time, it is also staggering in the context of dollars. At the start of

the pandemic there was about \$1.84 trillion worth of physical US currency in circulation, according to the Federal Reserve. That means in the last two years above and beyond any normal government spending there's been in total more than twice the amount of all coin and paper currency out there between just the 3 stimulus bills and the infrastructure package!

What does this all mean for us as taxpayers? It means that in aggregate the cost for these pieces of legislation exceeds \$40,000 per household. Would it have been easier or better just to give every household \$40,000 rather than the way things are being done? Perhaps. While that is debatable, what's not is that this sum is eventually going to have to be paid for through tax increases and/or printing of money (which is in part to blame for us currently seeing the highest levels in inflation in 40 years).

While these numbers are all large and quite scary, what's scarier is that according to the non partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) the US has unfunded liabilities of over \$122 trillion currently. That too will have to be paid for in some way by somebody in the future. To go back to our original time conceptualization \$122 trillion is over 3.9 million year's worth of seconds.

All this spending is just at the federal level. While Kiplinger rated Kansas as one of the least tax friendly states for retirees, don't think things can't get worse. Tax rates are still lower than what they were prior to the Brownback tax cuts and the state rates dead last in reserve funds having exactly \$0, according to Pew Charitable Trusts. The top tax rate has already increased nearly 24% since the Brownback cuts ended and would still need to rise another 13% just to get back to where the tax rates were previously. Don't be surprised if tax rates increase by this amount or more to help pay for future revenue shortfalls the state may experience.

We've said time and time again on our radio show, during public speaking events, in articles we've written, and in meetings with clients that retirees are one of the highest and most unfairly taxed groups out there. The recently passed SECURE Act is likely just the first step to even higher taxes on retirement accounts given not only the current spending spree, but all the unfunded liabilities our country will be facing in the future. Those in, near, or saving for retirement would be wise to get a tax reduction plan in place while the temporary Trump tax cuts (scheduled to end in 2024) are still in effect to at least help minimize that negative impact.

If you are interested in finding out what tax planning opportunities there might be for your personal situation, our firm is still scheduling new client meetings via phone, video conferencing and in person.

Other great articles about retirement, investing, and tax reduction can be seen at RetireTopeka.com/blog.

Material discussed is meant for general/informational purposes and is not intended to be used as the sole basis for any financial decisions, nor be construed as advice to meet your particular needs. Please consult a financial professional for further information. Investing in securities involves risk and profit cannot be guaranteed.

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Five Facts You Should Know about 529 College Savings Plans

By Jim Hanna

Funding college expenses for children remains one of the biggest savings goals for many adults. 529s are one of the most effective education savings plans due to the flexibility and important tax advantages they provide. But like any investment vehicle, there are important considerations you should keep in mind.



Hanna

Here are five facts about 529 plans you should know as you consider your options.

Fact #1 – The tax benefits are significant

529 plans are similar in structure to Roth IRAs. You make contributions using after-tax dollars. In more than half of all states, state income tax deductions or credits are available for those making contributions. Earnings generated within the 529 plan grow on a tax-deferred basis. Then, when the money is needed for qualified education expenses (see below), you can withdraw funds tax-free.

Fact #2 – Contribution limits are high

Although often compared to IRAs, 529 plans have the advantage of being able to set aside much larger sums. There are no annual contribution limits, but your state will limit aggregate funds in 529 plans, ranging from \$235,000 to \$542,000. You can invest large lump sums or make regular monthly contributions to a plan. The one limitation to keep in mind is the annual gift tax exclusion of \$15,000 (in 2021). Any amount invested in a 529 plan in excess of that in a given year is applied against your lifetime gift tax exclusion, which now totals \$11.7 million (in 2021). However, you are allowed to make a single contribution of up to \$75,000 (in 2021) for a beneficiary in one year in place of five annual contributions of up to \$15,000 without using any of your lifetime gift tax exclusion.

Fact #3 – Contributions can come from a variety of people

Parents are frequently the initiators of 529 plans, but not always. These plans allow virtually anyone to make contributions for the benefit of a selected individual. Quite often, grandparents will do so for their grandchildren. It can be an effective way to reduce the size of their estate, while making a real difference in their grandchildren's future. Friends and other

relatives are also free to make contributions to these plans.

Fact #4 – There are a myriad of “qualified education expenses”

It is important to limit withdrawals to qualified expenses to avoid any tax or penalties. For college costs, this includes tuition and fees, books and other learning materials, including laptop computers and related equipment. Room and board for a college student is another qualifying expense, provided the student attends on at least a half-time basis. If housing is off campus, the college will provide a “cost of attendance” figure to determine what portion of housing costs are considered a qualified expense. In addition, \$10,000 per year can be used to pay K-12 tuition expenses and a lifetime total of \$10,000 can be applied to repay student loans for one individual.

Fact #5 – Leftover money can be used in other ways

If there is money left in a 529 that is unused by the designated student, the beneficiary can be changed to another qualifying family member. Funds can remain in the account indefinitely for the potential educational costs by the initial student or another family member later in life, including you. Unused funds can be distributed as a non-qualified withdrawal, but taxes and penalties generally apply on the earnings portion of the account.

Get started today

The sooner you start saving in a 529 plan, the more you can accumulate for the benefit of students you seek to support. Your financial advisor can help you assess your options and determine how this education savings strategy fits into your broader financial plans.

1 Maximum Contributions, SavingForCollege.com

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Scammers work year-round; stay vigilant

By Peggy Beasterfield
Owner, Peggy's Tax and Accounting Service

As the new year begins, the Internal Revenue Service reminds taxpayers to protect their personal and financial information throughout the year and watch out for IRS impersonation scams, along with other schemes, that try to trick people out of their hard-earned money.



Text message scams

Last year, there was an uptick in text messages that impersonated the IRS. These scams are sent to taxpayers' smartphones and have referenced COVID-19 and/or "stimulus payments." These messages often contain bogus links claiming to be IRS websites or other online tools. Other than IRS Secure Access, the IRS does not use text messages to discuss personal tax issues, such as those involving bills or refunds. The IRS also will not send taxpayers messages via social media platforms.

If a taxpayer receives an unsolicited SMS/text that appears to be from either the IRS or a program closely linked to the IRS, the taxpayer should take a screenshot of the text message and include the screenshot in an email to phishing@irs.gov with the following information:

- Date/time/time zone they received the text message
- Phone number that received the text message

The IRS reminds everyone NOT to click links or open attachments in unsolicited, suspicious or unexpected text messages – whether from the IRS, state tax agencies or others in the tax community.

Unemployment fraud

As a new tax season begins, the IRS reminds workers to watch out for claims of unemployment or other benefit payments for which they never applied. States have experienced a surge in fraudulent unemployment claims filed by organized crime rings using stolen identities. Criminals are using these stolen identities to fraudulently collect benefits.

Because unemployment benefits are taxable income, states issue Form 1099-G, Certain Government Payments, to recipients and to the IRS to report the amount

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of taxable compensation received and any withholding. Any worker receiving a fraudulent or inaccurate 1099-G should report it to the issuing state agency and request a corrected Form 1099-G.

Individuals may be victims of unemployment identity theft if they received:

- Mail from a government agency about an unemployment claim or payment for which they did not file. This includes unexpected payments or debit cards and could be from any state.
- An IRS Form 1099-G reflecting

unemployment benefits they weren't expecting or didn't receive. Box 1 on this form may show unemployment benefits they did not receive or an amount that exceeds their records for benefits they did receive.

- Other scams include:
- Email phishing scams
 - Phone scams

For more information visit irs.gov.



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opinion

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Why Believers Must Support the Freedom Convoy

By Amir George

The Freedom Convoy, which made worldwide headlines to protest what many have called massive injustices in Canada, was broken up by police this past week and weekend, but not before getting its message clear to lawmakers—people are not going to sit idly by and let government roll over them.

And, it has inspired many in other countries to take up the cause against government overreach.

Led and sustained by believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, over 50,000 strong, truckers in Canada made a stand to put an end to outlandish mandates. Before many were arrested, their voices were heard in the capital of Ottawa with the occupation of the capitol building and a barricade blocking the Canadian US border.

Cheered on by massive crowds on their trans-continental journey, the movement has rallied similar response in the U.S. and other countries as free citizens finally begin to stand up with the U.S. Convoy, preparing to travel from California to Washington D.C.

"We are here until all mandates are dropped" said one participant in

Ottawa. "We were talking to one of our fellow truckers who came from another country who said he had come 30 years ago to seek freedom and will not allow this country to become like the one he had left."

Feckless Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau escaped the capitol last week and gave a press conference from an undisclosed location in hiding, saying:

"I have attended protests and rallies in the past. When I agreed with the goals, when I supported the people expressing their concerns and their issues, Black Lives Matter is an excellent example of that, but I have also chosen to not go anywhere near protests that have expressed hateful rhetoric, violence toward fellow citizens. And a disrespect, not just of science, but of the frontline health workers and quite frankly, the 90% of truckers who have been doing the right thing to keep Canadians safe, to put food on our tables. Canadians know where I stand. This is a moment for responsible leaders to think carefully about where they stand and who they stand with."

Those who continue to believe in freedom are encouraged to visit thepeo-



plesconvoy.org to stay updated on this noble cause.

So, who are these people? The website says they are "truckers, moms, students, nurses, doctors, investors, county workers, teachers, cowboys, loggers, engineers, sanitation workers, professors, cashiers, flight attendants, pilots, sales reps and physical therapists, among others."

And what is their declaration? The website says: "We the People of the United States, in Order to restore our once perfect Union, re-establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense of all, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings

of Liberty, do ordain and establish the restoration movement of The People's Convoy for the United States of America.

"We demand the declaration of national emergency concerning the COVID-19 pandemic be lifted immediately and our cherished constitution reign supreme. We are the people of the United States of America and we stand together under the banner of freedom, which is the one thing that unites us all. Liberty flows through all of our veins."

Believers must band together in prayer and ask God to intervene in this noble cause for freedom.

Living in an Age of Deception



CLINT
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Awakenings, Inc.

hopefortoday

Are there occasions when we believe deceitful practices are ethical because we feel the ends justify it? Imagine having a great sense of personal conviction over something. There is a goal to be achieved, but there is an obstacle. It is something you cannot personally control, so you engage in careful thought about how to proceed. Things come to mind that involve trickery and evasive actions. After carefully weighing the options, you feel that because it is of utmost importance, the means of deception is fully justified.

Have you ever heard of the Gibeonites? They were an ancient people that lived at the same time as the Jews when they entered in to take possession of their promised land. It is a story of deception.

The Gibeonites heard about the exploits of the Jews, how their army was defeating one nation after another, conquering land after land by the power of the Lord God. In an attempt to save themselves, they engaged in a

detailed scheme to deceive the Jewish leaders. The Gibeonites only lived a three-day journey from the Jews, but they portrayed themselves as living in a distant land. Their goal was to convince the Jews they lived far away, were no threat to them, then make a formal agreement where they would become the Jews servants, thereby protecting themselves from a military attack. Instead of achieving this through being truthful and coming to the Jews in surrender, they engaged in an elaborate scheme of deception.

God hates deception. It is a form of lying that produces division and distrust, while taking advantage of others for selfish gain. Deception relies upon self, rather than God. Instead of trusting and waiting upon Him, a deceiving person takes matters into their own hands without regard to God or others. It is evil and subject to the unbridled wrath of heaven wherever it may be found. God will show no partiality to deceivers. When the Gibeonites underhandedness came to light, Joshua questioned them, "Why did you deceive us?" (Joshua 9:22), then declared divine punishment, "Now therefore you are cursed . . ." (vs. 23)

Initially their deceptive plan worked because good men were deceived. The Jewish leaders questioned them carefully, yet neglected one important thing. They never prayed to the Lord their God who knows and reveals all truth. Instead, they foolishly relied on their own wisdom and gave way to the



schemes of the Devil without even realizing it until later.

When a cunning deceiver confesses their lawlessness to God there is mercy. Additionally, when one who is deceived confesses their fault in believing a lie, there is mercy. God can redeem and restore what deception sought to destroy. Read the rest of the story about the Jews and Gibeonites from the Bible in Joshua 9-10.

We live in a world where trickery and deceit are found in the home, at the workplace, in the church, in government; everywhere, people are deceiving and being deceived. But praise God, though evil's deceitfulness is a menace, Christ is King! Because He died and rose again, He is the victor! He will bring condemnation upon the deceptive but grace and mercy will abound for those who con-

fess and repent of their evil. They will receive His promises of forgiveness, life and peace.

A prayer for you - "Lord God, examine our hearts and reveal if there be any deceitfulness. Have we engaged in any trickery to achieve a selfish end? God of all truth, also search us and reveal if we have been deceived by a cunning and crafty soul, that we might confess our neglect of seeking your counsel. Give us wisdom and discernment to live holy and godly lives in times like these. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Clint Decker is President of Great Awakenings. Hope for Today is a nationally syndicated column.

If God used one of Clint's columns to impact your life, share your story at cdecker@greatawakenings.org.

Why Critical Theory Is More Dangerous Than You Realize

By Tom Argersinger

Over the course of this school year, I have received a number of requests for more detail regarding the definition of the term “critical theory” as the phrase has been used frequently over the last few months. There is much information out there on this topic, but I will begin to unpack it in this post.

In short, a “critical theory” has a distinctive aim: to unmask the ideology (set of ideas) falsely justifying some form of social or economic oppression—to reveal it... and, in so doing, to contribute to the task of ending that oppression. (Sourced on 9/28/21 at Marx & Critical Theory | Philosophy)

Here’s my take on the great challenges that the widespread use of critical theory, and it’s popular cousin, critical race theory, bring to our society, and particularly to education:

It oversimplifies the problem of oppression.

The roots of critical theory are found in the writings of Karl Marx, the German philosopher and economist, who assumed that human political life, and all of history, should be viewed through the lens of “power.” He assumed there is a wide difference between the “oppressors” and the “oppressed,” and that the oppressed people should work actively to bring down the



oppressors who are exerting power over them.

Looking at history through only one lens tends to make us short-sighted, and leads us to miss important cause and effect relationships that don’t fit with our preconceived notion of how a historical event, political system or human condition should be viewed.

It roots the response to the problem of oppression in a non-Biblical worldview.

Critical theory is closely related to postmodernism, a philosophy that rejects the idea of absolute or objective truth, and replaces it with the belief that we construct our own reality from the inside out our ability as humans to discover truth and knowledge in the world around us.

So why is critical theory and its kin so

dangerous?

Because these ideas are being intentionally and openly perpetuated through the three most influential centers of our culture:

Teaching and learning in public and many private schools, Kindergarten through college

Entertainment and the arts

The media, especially social media

These three sectors provide a powerful and pervasive platform for the central tenets of a worldview that, in reality, is a complete game-changer for society, because it feeds our sinful desire to be the center of all things and the one who ultimately decides what is true and good.

The Big Picture

For nearly 200 years, a basic Christian perspective held sway in American culture and society. This perspective served to balance the natural human tendency to “make ourselves little gods” and see everything from our own reference point.

Unfortunately, since the turn of the century America has become increasingly “post-Christian.” Ideas related to critical theory and postmodernism are rapidly taking root, and have in fact become the new governing ideas in our culture.

Nature abhors a vacuum and so do societies. Therefore, if Christianity is no longer the guiding worldview of our society, then something must take its place.

Critical theory, and its cousins critical race theory and revisionist history, altered textbooks and the bold redefinition of basic terms (such as “women” or “man”), fits the bill nicely as a replacement worldview for society.

Why? This worldview allows us humans to fulfill our greatest desire: to be “like God” (See Genesis 3:5). It gives us a reason to do what is right in our own eyes, without fear of real accountability for our beliefs, convictions and actions.

So why should we care?

Well, as parents and educators we should deeply care, because there is no such thing as “neutral” education. All teaching arises from a worldview, or way of

seeing the important things in the world.

How we answer the “Eternal Questions” (What is True, Real, Good and Beautiful) literally defines the bedrock upon which our teaching and learning rest.

God, as the Creator and Sustainer of all things, gets to decide on definitions. He decides what is True, Right, Beautiful, and Real. In fact, He Himself is the definition of those four central aspects of existence: He is Truth, He is Rightness (or Good), He is Beauty, He is Real.

In closing, I ask this question: How can a society possibly hang together and not simply blow apart if there are no mutually agreeable standards?

The answer seems to be a “self-evident truth:” totally autonomous individuals do not make for a peaceful, prosperous and truly successful society.

I strongly urge you to check out this link to a great article by Pastor Tim Keller. He unpacks in more detail what I have tried to do here:

Thank you for reading this long post. Pray with us at Veritas Christian Academy that God would continue to give us strength, clarity and wisdom as we daily pursue our mission of educating high school students through a Biblical worldview education.

May God give you wisdom as you parent and lead your children towards Jesus.

The Supreme Court Has Another Chance to Save the First Amendment

Simply because a person engages in a commercial interaction doesn’t give that person the right to compel others to say things that violate their conscience. If it does, then the First Amendment is useless.

Colorado is notorious for manipulating public-accommodation laws to coerce speech and punish thought crimes. The state’s most famous victim is Jack Phillips, the man who refused to create a specialized cake for the marriage ceremony of a same-sex couple (before gay marriage was even legalized) because of his religious objections. Phillips’s decade-long, and ongoing, struggle against the imperious bigots of the Colorado Civil Rights Commission, and their private allies, has nearly destroyed his

business. But this concerted, premeditated effort has not only been intended to punish Phillips. It’s meant to dissuade other dissenters as well.

The 7–2 Supreme Court decision in Masterpiece Cakeshop was a narrow legal victory for Phillips, but it largely punted on the question of religious liberty. Now, the Supreme Court has agreed to take on 303 Creative v. Elenis, a case involving a website designer named Lorie Smith, who is challenging the Colorado Civil Rights Commission’s ability to compel her to create websites that violate her religious beliefs. In many ways, the case is similar to Masterpiece Cakeshop, and, so, unsurprisingly, the media have unsheathed the same

lazy framing.

CNBC, for example, headlined its piece on the news, “Supreme Court takes up clash over Colorado law’s protection for same-sex weddings” — a completely erroneous headline; this case has nothing to do with same-sex marriage laws. The piece goes on to claim that Smith is challenging a Colorado law that “bars businesses from refusing to serve customers based on their sexual orientation.”

This is misleading, at best. Smith does not “discriminate” against people because of their sexual orientation. She is in court to preserve her ability not to say things she doesn’t believe. The state of Colorado contends it is empowered to bore into her soul, divine her intentions, and then dictate the words Smith must convey, or it will put her out of business.

Reuters says, “U.S. Supreme Court takes up clash between religion and LGBT rights.” This isn’t true, either. First, religious freedom and free expression are both protected under the Constitution, while LGBT “rights” are not. There is no “clash.” Free expression is a protection afforded all Americans. A gay web designer should never be coerced by the state to create a site celebrating traditional marriage if it violates his or her principles. It is only one side in the culture war that seems intent on inducing people to say things they don’t believe.

Not only is the Colorado Civil Rights Commission forcing Smith to publish websites that promote ideas that violate her long-held, long-established beliefs; it also prohibits her from even explaining her case on her company’s website. As her lawyers told the justices, Smith hopes to work on celebrating her conception of marriage — a “lifelong unity and devotion as man and wife” — and will refuse to “promote messages contrary to her faith,



such as messages that condone violence or promote sexual immorality, abortion, or same-sex marriage.” These are clear, consistent positions that comport with tenets of orthodox Christianity — as well as with Judaism and Islam.

Using Colorado’s illiberal logic, a state can compel a religious florist to create a bouquet celebrating abortion because only women, a protected group, can obtain them. Or it could force a conservative cake maker to create Black Lives Matter cakes, because African Americans make up a large part of that cause. (Alas, I suspect many progressives would be happy to enforce these examples as well.)

At Slate, anti-speech activist Mark Joseph Stern engages in the usual fear-mongering about the slippery slope should SCOTUS stop the government from compelling speech — soon a “racist photographer could refuse to shoot an interracial wedding” or a “hairdresser could refuse to serve Black people.” Now, I realize it’s difficult for those who believe in racial essentialism to comprehend the difference between immutable characteristics and independent thoughts and actions, but no one is asking for the ability to “discriminate” against people for how they are born,

but rather for what they want to make her say.

That said, there’s no addendum to the Constitution that protects hurt feelings. Even if Smith were a bigot, even if her views reflected an ugly minority view — even if she only wanted to make websites for misandrist chemtrails conspiracists — that’s her business. Free expression isn’t contingent on state approval. And the marketplace is home to thousands of web designers who will create any themed site you can conjure up. Go elsewhere.

But since we’re on the topic of slippery slopes, it’s worth noting that the authoritarians on the Colorado Civil Rights Commission not only believe that any consumer should be able to walk into a place of business, but also that certain protected groups of consumers should be empowered to walk into a place of business and dictate what the owner must say. If this is truly the choice (and I don’t think it is), then anti-discrimination laws must be overturned and rewritten in a constitutional manner. One of the fundamental ideals of liberty is that we don’t coerce people to say things — or refrain from saying things — in ways that violate their conscience.

—David Harsanyi

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The People's Convoy of truckers heads from California to Washington, D.C.



Foundation for Civil Liberties & Freedom, which is being supported through private banking, as well as accountants and lawyers who will track the donations and place them accordingly.

In a press release, the organization behind the convoy stated:

The message of The People's Convoy is simple. The last 23 months of the COVID-19 pandemic have been a rough road for all Americans to

(which is subject to change):

Day 1: Wednesday, February 23
Morning – Depart Adelanto Stadium, CA
Evening – Arrive in Kingman, AZ for overnight stay

Day 2: Thursday, February 24
Morning – Depart Kingman, AZ head east on I-40, toward Lupton, AZ
Evening – Arrive in Lupton, AZ for overnight stay

Day 3: Friday, February 25
Morning – Depart Lupton, AZ on I-40 eastbound thru New Mexico
Evening – Arrive in Glenrio, TX for overnight stay

Day 4: Saturday, February 26
Morning – Depart Glenrio, TX
Evening – Arrive in Elk City, OK area

for overnight stay
Day 7: Tuesday, March 1
Morning – Depart Sullivan, MO area
Evening – Arrive in Indianapolis, IN area for overnight stay

Day 8: Wednesday, March 2
Morning – Depart Indianapolis, IN area
Evening – Pause for rest in Indianapolis, IN area for overnight stay

Day 9: Thursday, March 3
Morning – Depart Indianapolis, IN area
Evening – Arrive in Cambridge, OH area for overnight stay

Day 10: Friday, March 4
Morning – Depart Cambridge, OH

The United States is about to get its own version of Canada's truck convoy. Truckers will leave Barstow, Calif., on Wednesday and head cross-country to Washington, D.C. Other convoys are also forming in other areas of the nation, all eventually heading for the nation's capital.

The large convoy goes by the name "The People's Convoy" and will be non-partisan and cross-cultural in nature. At the start of the convoy, an estimated 500 to 1,000 trucks will gather and depart eastward for Kingman, Ariz. Other exact locations have not yet been specified because of the need to maintain operational security and leave time to coordinate with local municipalities.

The non-partisan convoy will cross the southwest through Oklahoma, then Missouri and across the Midwest.

More details on the routes will be released two or three days in advance "as

safety dictates, but you can expect us to travel along I-40 and work our way up toward D.C.," said Brian Brase, one of the core truckers who are organizing the convoy. Brase already has been involved with various protests against overregulation in the trucking industry for five years.

"It might be truckers that started it," he said. "But this is the People's Convoy for a reason. This is for every American, no matter where you come from or your personal background. This is for everyone that believes in their personal freedoms as a human being, and as an American, their personal freedoms that are protected by the Constitution of the United States."

After seeing the problems the Canadian convoy had with its GoFundMe page, organizers set up three different means to receive donations via credit card, PayPal or cryptocurrency. The donations are being handled through the nonprofit American

AMERICAN FREEDOM CONVOY 2022: CALIFORNIA TO D.C.
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MAIN ROUTES → → →
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We start in Barstow, CA. February 23RD. Be there. We honk at dawn.

travel: spiritually, emotionally, physically, and – not least – financially. With the advent of the vaccine and workable therapeutic agents, along with the hard work of so many sectors that contributed to declining COVID-19 cases and severity of illness, it is now time to re-open the country. The average American worker needs to be able to end-run the economic hardships of the last two years, and get back to the business of making bread – so they can pay their rents and mortgages and help jumpstart this economy. To that end, it's time for elected officials to work with the blue collar and white-collar workers of America and restore accountability and liberty – by lifting all mandates and ending the state of emergency – as COVID is well-in-hand now, and Americans need to get back to work in a free and unrestricted manner.

Another goal of the movement is to hold officials accountable for the actions they took in the name of public health during the pandemic. Brase explained they would like to see "congressional hearings, as to several things: why the actions were taken that were taken, what science did they use to [back up] their actions."

Other convoys forming across the nation include American Freedom Convoy and USA Freedom Convoy. One of the major routes will pass through Topeka and Kansas City.

Organizers have released the schedule details for the People's Convoy Route

for overnight stay
Day 5: Sunday, February 27
Morning – Depart Elk City, OK area
Evening – Arrive in Vinita, OK area for overnight stay
Day 6: Monday, February 28
Morning – Depart Vinita, OK area
Evening – Arrive in Sullivan, MO area

area
Evening – Arrive in Hagerstown, MD area for overnight stay
Day 11: Saturday, March 5
Morning – Depart Hagerstown, MD area
Evening – Arrive in the DC Beltway area
–Alan Goforth / Metro Voice

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INTERVIEW: The ‘silent genocide’ against Christians in Nigeria

“A silent genocide is going on against Christian communities in Southern Kaduna.” That’s the assessment Jonathan Asake, President of the Southern Kaduna People’s Union in Nigeria.

For seven years, Christian communities in the south of Nigeria’s Kaduna State have been under increasing attack by Fulani Muslim militias. Massacres, kidnappings, and forced displacements have taken place on a massive scale. The attacks are part of a wider campaign across Nigeria’s “Middle Belt,” the country’s central region, where hundreds of indigenous ethnic groups, mostly Christians, find themselves targeted by Fulani militias. The Southern Kaduna People’s Union (SOKAPU) is a local organization working to draw attention to this hidden crisis.

In January, Jonathan Asake, the president of SOKAPU, spoke with Christian Solidarity International about the imprisonment of his organization’s spokesman, Luka Binniyat, for writing an article about a massacre of Christians in his home region. Binniyat was finally freed on bail Feb. 3. Asake also spoke about an ongoing and silent genocide against his people, and the wider political context in which it is taking place.

CSI: Thank you, Mr Asake, for joining us today. Let’s start with Luka Binniyat. Who is he? Why has he just spent three months in prison?

JA: Luka Binniyat is a journalist by profession. He is also the publicity secretary for the Southern Kaduna People’s Union (SOKAPU), an umbrella organization that I am the president of, which represents the 67 indigenous nationalities who live in the southern part of Kaduna State. In late 2017, he was imprisoned for over 100 days over a story he had written about the killings of Christians in our state. He was eventually released on bail. But the charges against him have not been dismissed to this day. This campaign against him was masterminded by the state government, under its current governor, Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai, who has been clamping down on the free press ever since he became governor.

The current case against Luka started on 4 November last year when security agents came to the SOKAPU office in Kaduna to arrest him. He called me in Abuja and told me that he was being arrested. I thought he was joking; I said, “What, again? Fine, let them take you away.” He said, “No, I’m not joking!” and he passed the phone to the security agents. That’s when I realized it was real.

I quickly got someone to follow them in a car, to make sure they were really security forces. We have had instances in the past when people have been taken like that, and that is the last you ever hear of them, and every security agency denies having them.

When Luka appeared in court a few days later, handcuffed to another criminal, he was charged with “defamation of character,” “injurious falsehood,” and “cyber-stalking.” In the ninety days that followed, the government used a variety of tactics to keep him from posting bail. First, they filed charges in a low-level court, even though one of the charges was federal. When the case was finally moved to the right court, the judges repeatedly failed to show up to hearings. Finally, he was granted bail, but the conditions of the bail were



so onerous that we didn’t know when we would be able to get him out. [Editor’s note: Luka was released a week after this interview, on 3 February.]

CSI: What exactly is the accusation against Luka? What did he write that was so offensive? JA: Last September, Fulani terrorists attacked Madamai village in southern Kaduna, and killed 38 people. This kind of attack has become routine; a silent genocide is going on against Christian communities in Southern Kaduna and the whole of Nigeria’s Middle Belt.

Normally, when people are killed like that, the government will use threats to force the local people to bury the dead quickly in mass graves. But this time we said, “No. We must make coffins and give these people a proper burial service, in a church.” So, we had a service on 30 September. I and the other speakers at the service spoke in anger, seeing 38 dead bodies in front of us, mostly women and children and old people who could not run. We spoke out against the government that is downplaying this genocide, instead of coming to the help of the victims.

Luka wrote an article about this event. In his article, he quoted our senator as lamenting that Kaduna State’s Commissioner for Internal Security – who is a Christian – is being used by the government to cover up the genocide. Under pressure from the government, the senator now denies saying this, and Luka has been accused of fabricating the quote.

CSI: Many people describe the attacks in your state as a conflict between “herders” and “farmers”. You instead speak of a genocide of Christians and indigenous minority groups in the region. How would you explain these attacks?

JA: I have stated my views on this very clearly in public. Nigeria’s president is Fulani. Virtually everyone that surrounds him is Fulani. The governor of Kaduna State is also Fulani, and he has not hidden his own agenda. I know why our communities are being attacked. It is to take over the lands of indigenous people and change the demographics of the region.

In 1804, there was a jihad in Nigeria by a Fulani warrior named Osman Dan Fodio. He wanted to drive all the way to Nigeria’s southern coast; it was said that his goal was to dip the Qur’an in the Atlantic Ocean. But he could not conquer the Middle Belt. Later, missionaries brought Christianity here, and Christianity became well-rooted in the region.

The same pattern of jihadist attacks is being repeated today. Defenceless communities are attacked, women and chil-

dren are killed, other women are raped and enslaved, farmland and food reserves are destroyed, houses are burned, and finally the lands are occupied. In our state, over 108 communities have been taken over, and hundreds of thousands are displaced. Some of these people have been displaced for seven years.

The “farmers and herders” narrative is misleading. We know what a farmer-herder clash looks like; we had them when I was a kid. A nomadic Fulani herder would drive his cattle into farmland, the farmer would confront him, and they would start fighting. Usually, it was settled within the village community. What is happening today is different! These are unprovoked, premeditated attacks, by people who are well-protected, well-armed, and who get away with it. To my knowledge, no one has been prosecuted for these attacks. No one!

Every indicator points to the fact that the government knows what is happening. Let me give you an example. In May-June 2020, there were severe attacks in southern Kaduna State. The governor responded by imposing a 24-hour curfew – on the same communities that were attacked! These curfews lasted for months in some cases. People who dared to go out to look for food for their families were shot by security forces. Meanwhile, the attackers were walking around freely with their machine guns and attacked the same communities again! That alone suggests complicity on the part of the government. The instrument of government is being used to protect the perpetrators.

CSI: We’ve been talking about Nigeria’s Middle Belt, but there is similar violence elsewhere in the country, by Boko Haram in the northeast, and more recently, by “bandits” in the northwest. Many of these “bandit” groups seem to be Fulani-led, but their victims are not primarily Christians – they are Hausa Muslims. What is the connection between the massive violence in these three regions?

It’s like Frankenstein’s monster – the monster that consumes its maker. When Boko Haram started back in 2009, many northern leaders saw them as religious champions who could be used to do their own bidding. I warned at the time that a day would come when Boko Haram will have dealt with the Christians and the non-Muslims, and they would turn their guns on the Muslim communities. This is what happened.

It was the same when these “herdmen” attacks started. I told northern leaders, “If you keep quiet, when these terrorists find that they cannot accomplish their mission, they will turn on the people who are supporting them.” And today we see the killings in Zamfara and Katsina and

Kebbi and other parts of the northwest. If men and women of conscience refuse to speak out against evil when it starts, it will ultimately consume everybody.

The government is less and less able to challenge these forces. If they had dealt with them immediately, it would have been different. But now, look at how hard it was for President Buhari to label these people “terrorists” – even after they brought down an air force fighter jet!

CSI: So now they’re being called “terrorists” but not yet treated as terrorists.

JA: Exactly. The level of carnage these people are perpetuating is beyond what you can imagine. As I speak, many people in the suburbs of Kaduna are walking in the darkness towards Kaduna city. When 6pm comes, there is a mass exodus towards the city. People sleep in the city because they don’t feel safe at home.

The terrorists are now kidnapping people and receiving huge amounts of money for it. On 10 January in Southern Kaduna, a young man named Silas was killed in front of his pregnant wife. Then they kidnapped her and her three young children and demanded 100 million Nigerian naira in ransom. Silas’s sister called me crying in the middle of the night, asking for help. She has no one else to ask – the government leaves people to their fate. This sort of thing happens all the time.

Many journalists are afraid to report on these things. The weight is on us at SOKAPU to lead the way. We always go to the site of attacks, with cameras and journalists, to beam the news to the world of what is happening. That is why the government does not like us. But all we’re doing is reporting on the atrocities, on the genocide that is going on.

CSI: Indeed, this violence tends not to make headlines, either in Nigeria or the outside world. But western governments know very well what is going on in Nigeria. The US and the UK in particular take a strong stand – in public, at least – on human rights and religious freedom. What impact have they made in Southern Kaduna and the Middle Belt?

JA: We always feel the impact of the US government’s decisions in Nigeria. Under President Trump, we were often called in by the American embassy to give reports on the attacks on our communities, and USAID came to meet us in our offices. They listened to us and spoke about implementing projects. But under the new administration, it’s different. When Secretary of State Blinken came to Nigeria, we thought he was going to raise these issues. Instead, Nigeria was recently removed from the US’s list of “Countries

of Particular Concern” for religious persecution. I don’t know what is going on. The level of religious persecution in Nigeria is unprecedented. If the US government knows this, and still makes this move, then we don’t know where else to turn to for help.

The government here was very afraid of the Trump administration, and so there was a limit to the atrocities that took place. But now the government is no longer afraid, and the atrocities are becoming so brazen.

CSI: Are US and UK government aid agencies helping on the ground?

JA: We have not seen them, truly. We had a very good meeting with USAID towards the end of the Trump administration, where they promised to help us rebuild destroyed communities. We were so happy. This is what we need, for people to return to their homes. But after the change of administration, they went quiet.

CSI: In the West, it is often said that the cause of all this violence is really climate change, that desertification is driving competition for resources. How would you respond to that?

JA: I reject that argument. Of course, the north where the herders are coming from is more of a desert, and the land to the south is greener. But we in the Middle Belt are also experiencing resource scarcity. Our population is increasing while the amount of land stays the same. What would happen if, because we wanted more land, we went to the north and started killing women and children and old people and taking over their land by force? Would any government sit back and watch that happen? No. The answer is obviously no. The problem is not desertification; the problem is that killers are not being brought to justice.

CSI: Do you see a connection with the implementation of shari’a law in Kaduna State and Nigeria’s other northern states, and the violence you are describing?

JA: The adoption of Islamic shari’a law paved the way for what we see today. The constitution of Nigeria clearly states that no religion can be adopted as an official religion, and that all Nigerians have freedom of religion. But when the northern states adopted shari’a in violation of the constitution, President Obasanjo refused to use his authority to stop it. He hoped it would just fizzle out, even though 3,000 people were killed in Kaduna State after the Christians protested the imposition of shari’a here. Boko Haram grew out of the shari’a movement in the north. People also said Boko Haram would fizzle out. It has never fizzled out and has consumed millions of Nigerians.

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Russia invades, causing Ukrainians to panic, worldwide market to plunge

After Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in late February, Ukrainians could be seen fleeing their nation, with freeways and country roads across the nation backed up for hundreds of miles. Video of the capital of Kyiv showed most city streets filled with cars, buses, and trucks filled with families, as smoke from Russian bombs rises in the distance.

Many are attempting to flee to Poland, a NATO member where most Western nations have relocated their Ukrainian embassies. Historians are comparing the Russian invasion to that of Nazi Germany invading Poland at the start of World War II.

Overnight, the first lines of private vehicles reached the Medyka crossing, carrying luggage and accompanied by children. Many of those staying behind are arming themselves for a guerilla war after the Ukrainian Parliament passed a bill Wednesday allowing citizens to carry firearms. The Ukrainian military is also making weapons available to the public.

Alexander Bazhanov fled his home in eastern Ukraine with his wife and young child, taking only what they could carry and walking the final part of their journey into Poland.

The 34-year-old technical manager from Mariupol, 70 miles from Donetsk, decided to cross into Poland when he learned the war had started from a colleague. He spoke to

Reuters.

"I don't have any feelings other than that I am very scared," Bazhanov said at the pedestrian border crossing, about 400 km from Warsaw. "I will visit my father in Spain but I don't have any money and I don't know how I will do that."

Russian forces invaded Ukraine by land, air and sea on after Russian President Vladimir Putin authorized what he called a "special military operation" in the east. Putin implied that if the West responded and attempted to help Ukraine, he would use all "means" necessary. Western governments took that to mean Putin was threatening the use of nuclear weapons.

Stocks around the world, including the New York Stock Exchange, plummeted as Europe's first war in 75 years got underway. Russian stocks also plummeted and the country's currency sank against the dollar to its lowest level on record, prompting Russia's central bank to announce emergency support measures, as news of the long-anticipated Russian military action against Ukraine hit headlines.

It is believed that average Russians are against the actions of Putin which may be causing a run on Russia's already shaky banking system.

In a televised address, Putin announced a "special military operation" in Ukraine that he claimed was meant to protect civilians and demil-



itarize Ukraine, but which Western leaders denounced as a baseless act of aggression.

President Joe Biden issued a statement saying that Putin "has chosen a premeditated war that will bring a catastrophic loss of life and human suffering."

"The prayers of the entire world are with the people of Ukraine tonight as they suffer an unprovoked and unjustified attack by Russian military forces," Biden said.

Biden has been criticized by pro-democracy groups around the world for inaction while Europe's largest democracy is invaded. Many expect Ukrainian leaders to be assassinated

or "disappeared" once Russia enters the Ukrainian capital.

Video has emerged on social media of Russian forces firing missiles at several Ukrainian cities, landing troops on its south coast, and tanks and other military vehicles rolling into Ukraine from Russia-aligned Belarus. Russian forces invaded the country from four directions, including Moldova from its eastern border.

The Russian Defense Ministry said it had struck Ukrainian military assets with precision strikes and wasn't targeting populated areas, claiming that "there is no threat to civilian population."

President Biden, and other world leaders have announced more sanctions against Russia.

The invasion, and resulting harm to financial markets and oil supplies will likely cause gas to rise to \$5 per gallon across the U.S. One reason is that after Biden began shutting down North American sources for oil, it also began reimporting oil from Russia. The Trump administration had ended American reliance on Russian and Middle Eastern oil and, for the first time in many decades, made the United States energy independent. That self-reliance was ended under the Biden administration.

TOPEKA NEWS BRIEFS

Winter Trout Stocking Feb. 24 at Lake Shawnee

7,000 pounds of rainbow trout will be released into Lake Shawnee Thursday, Feb. 24. The public may view the trout stocking at 2 p.m. Thursday at the main boat ramp off of Beach Drive. The lake will be closed to fishing from Feb. 23 to 6 a.m. March 2 to allow the trout to acclimate to the lake. A \$14.50 trout permit is required to catch trout through April 15.

New off-leash dog area opens at Lake Shawnee; Hills Bark Park near reopening

A new 5-acre off-leash dog area is now open on the west side of Lake Shawnee just north of the tennis courts. In a survey, the public overwhelmingly chose Lake Shawnee as the preferred site for a second off-leash area. In Gage Park, thanks to a \$175,000 gift from Hill's Pet Nutrition, Hill's Bark Park has doubled in size to five acres. New fencing, irrigation for the turf and new lighting are part of the project which will eventually include new shade structures, benches and drinking fountains. Once the final lights are

installed and wired in the next few weeks, the park will reopen for use while work continues into April when we plan to hold a ribbon cutting for the completed improvements to the park.

Summer Camp Registration begins March 1

Camps include:

- Back to Nature - Big Gage Shelter
- Passport to Adventure - Crestview Shelter
- Camp Connections Lake - Lake Shawnee Recreation Building
- Camp Connections North - Shawnee North Community Center
- Fun Zone - Oakland Community Center
- Civitan Camp - Civitan Building in Gage Park

Topeka zoo is Expecting!

The Topeka Zoo announce that Rudy, 33-year old Bornean Orangutan, is pregnant with her third offspring to be born at the Topeka Zoo. Rudy's pregnancy is in accordance with her Species Survival Plan, which pairs her with male orangutan, Mawas. While the exact date of the birth is unknown, the arrival of the baby orangutan is

expected from late April to early May.

This spring the Topeka Zoo presents DINOSAURS ALIVE! This new dinosaur exhibit is an immersive experience featuring life-sized, animatronic dinosaurs that move and make sounds just like the creatures that used to roam the planet! Travel through time and discover different time periods, admire the magnitude of a Tyrannosaurus Rex, and learn about "modern dinosaurs" still living today. It's sure to be a roaring good time!

The life-like creatures were created by Dino Don Inc. With each ticket, you get access to the Zoo AND the dinosaur experience. There will also be educational activities in the Field Camp, and at the Dig Site. Admission to Dinosaurs Alive! is covered in the cost of admission to the Zoo.

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Crumbl Cookie coming to Topeka

Topeka will soon be getting its own Crumbl Cookie in coming months.

The popular cookie company



appears to be moving into the Capital City as promotional banners can be seen behind the windows of a storefront near the West Ridge Plaza at 2120 SW Wanamaker Rd. Darren Haddock, the co-owner of multiple Crumbl Cookie locations in Kansas, told KSNT News the Topeka location could open up as soon as April this year.

Crumbl Cookie currently has locations in Overland Park, Olathe, Derby and Wichita. To see all

Crumbl Cookie locations in Kansas and nationwide, click here.

The company got its start in Logan, Utah in 2017 with co-founders Jason McGowan and Sawyer Hemsely and has since experienced rapid growth, claiming on its website to be the second-largest cookie company in the nation. Its signature pink boxes, rotating weekly menu and delivery services have all contributed to Crumbl Cookie's current success.

Broadcaster hopes Protestant, Orthodox Christians will unite in Ukraine

Orthodox and evangelical Christians share concern about the rising tensions in Ukraine.

Daniel Johnson, who runs a Christian radio broadcasting organization in Eastern Europe, elaborated on the situation on the ground and its implications for people of faith living in Ukraine in an interview. "Christians are hoping that the Russians don't come too far, because churches will definitely be shut down in the areas that they take over, because that's their practice and that's their history," he said.

Johnson shared his vision for the role of the Ukrainian Christian community as the threat of escalating conflict looms.

"This is a great time for the church in Ukraine to be strong and be an example and witness for Christ, knowing that God is in control God is sovereign and everything is according to his plan, so we don't worry about it," he said. "We go on the air explaining to Christians that this is their time, this is their time to be a



Christians gather to pray outside an Orthodox church.

witness for Christ, and it's really a wonderful opportunity for the church despite all the chaos that can be happening here."

Johnson attributed some of the unrest in the region to the schism between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

"Tanks are rolling down from Russia, Russian Orthodox priests are blessing the tanks," he said. "The Ukrainian Orthodox priests are blessing the Ukrainian soldiers to fight against Russia, so it's a tragic scene where two brother faiths, Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox, have completely sided on the national

goals of their one country."

Protestants and Evangelicals with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and Russian Orthodox Church's focus on "nationalism and patriotism." He rejoiced that "we are evangelicals, and we've never been controlled by the state, nor will we."

Regardless of what happens in the geopolitical arena regarding Russia and Ukraine, U.S. Christians still have a role to play in ensuring peace in the region.

Johnson said that the Evangelical community in Ukraine is "working mainly to just put the word of God out there ... to the general public and even to the Orthodox listeners who like to hear. We're teaching them the word of God and saying, 'Trust the Lord and your ultimate allegiance is to Jesus, not to the leadership of any one country that ... you find yourself in.'"

"We need to encourage Christians in America to invest in broadcasting the gospel throughout Russia and Ukraine and Belarus as our best way

to help these people," he said. "Not through political or economic actions but actually investing in ministries that communicate the Gospel and teach the scriptures on a daily basis."

"We need to be a force of prayer for peace between these nations and trust God to determine the outcome of the lives of the people both in Ukraine and Russia, because in many ways ... it's a brotherhood of nations. We need to be focused on praying that God intervenes and His will is done because ... there's no real military solution from the U.S. to the problem in Ukraine," he added. "It's either you stay out of it, or if you're going to get in it, it will escalate to the point where it will be beyond people's control and we've been through those scenarios before."

While Ukraine is not a member of NATO, the United States provided security assurances to the Eastern European country in the Budapest Memorandum of 1994.

White evangelicals oppose pathway to citizenship for illegal aliens, survey finds

White evangelicals are the only religious demographic that opposes a pathway to citizenship for those in the country illegally, a new survey found.

Sixty-two percent of Americans believe there should be a pathway to citizenship for immigrants living in the country illegally, provided they meet certain requirements, according to a Public Religion Research Institute poll. Although Americans' views on the issue have changed little since 2013 when the same question was asked -- back then, 63 percent supported it -- the opinions of white evangelicals have changed dramatically.

Less than half of white evangelicals support a pathway to citizenship, a nearly double-digit plunge from the 56 percent who backed it in 2013. Among white evangelicals who attend church weekly, support is even lower (45 percent) and has fallen 13 points from 2013. White mainline Protestants (59 percent), black Protestants (75 percent), white Catholics (54 percent) and Hispanic Catholics (70 percent) all back a pathway to citizen-

ship.

Presidents Bush and Obama supported a pathway to citizenship, as does President Biden. President Trump, too, backed a pathway to citizenship, although his plan focused only on younger immigrants living in the country illegally.

On another question, nearly two-thirds of Americans support allowing immigrants brought illegally to the United States as children to be given a pathway to citizenship. White evangelicals (47 percent) and Republicans (44 percent) are the only groups that do not sup-

port such a plan.

Meanwhile, white evangelicals also are the least likely religious demographic to agree with the statement that the "growing number of newcomers from other countries strengthens American society." Only 35 percent of white evangelicals

agree with the statement, compared to 46 percent of white Catholics, 46 percent of white mainline Protestants, 69 percent of black Protestants and 61 percent of Hispanic Catholics. Among all Americans, 56 percent agree with the statement.

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Lots of entertainment in NOTO

The NOTO Arts & Entertainment District is the vibrant heartbeat of North Topeka that offers fine art experiences, unique shops, and all the mouth-watering food you could ever need!

SUE: The T. Rex Experience is open at Great Overland Station. See this fearsome fossil all the way from Chicago's Field Museum. Step into the world of SUE the T. Rex to uncover the mysteries about the life of this fearsome fossil. Get to know SUE at the Great Overland Station. This newly updated exhibit, all the way from Chicago's Field Museum is part of an immersive, multi-sensory experience.

On April 10, 2pm at Pavilion Theater in Redbud Park, Grace Reader's Theatre will re-create two scripts from old time radio, complete with live sound effects. The program will consist of two half hour programs, one drama and one comedy. Tickets are \$8 in advance or \$10 at the door.

Redbud Blues Concert with Ellie Smith & Ryan Verthein will take place on April 15, 6:30pm at

Redbud Park. This concert is an indoor/outdoor venue. No outside alcohol is permitted on park grounds. Bring a lawn chair and bring a friend! This is part of the Redbud Festival that takes place from April 1 to May 7.

NOTO in Bloom is coming up on April 23rd. Contact NOTO Arts District office for details.

On April 30 at 7pm, The Astonishing Curtis Sneden will amaze audiences with his unique brand of smart magic. This thought-provoking presentation on the untold powers of the human mind is designed especially for adult audiences. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door.

On May 1, 2:00 p.m The Astonishing Curits Sneden will amaze and amuse audiences of all ages with his engaging personal story of life as a mystery performer. This event is appropriate



for all ages. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door.

First Friday Art Walk hours are 10 am to 9 pm. Visit the NOTO Arts Center to pick up a map of participating businesses and view the newest exhibit at the Morris Gallery.

Entertainment can also be found on First Fridays, at various venues during the art walk up and down N. Kansas Avenue, as well as street-side vendors. The restaurants, locally owned shops, art galleries, antiques and studios have become a favorite art walk destination.

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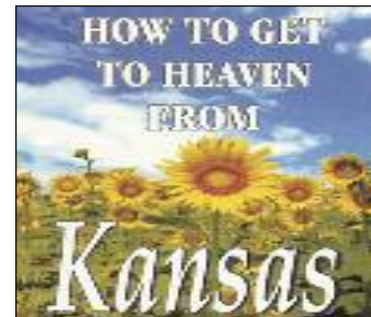
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1. Realize you are a sinner. Everyone starts the same place spiritually. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of god." (Rom. 3:23). Sin's penalty keeps you out of Heaven and condemns you to Hell, separating you from God. Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death." Sin brings both physical & spiritual death. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." (Rev. 20:14).

2. Realize Jesus paid the penalty. Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection provided a way for you to go to heaven and restore your relationship with God. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8). Since Jesus, God's Son, was the only One who could pay for our sin, He is the only Way to Heaven.

3. Repent of your sin and receive Jesus as your Savior. In order to go to Heaven from KANSAS, or anywhere else, you must accept Christ by calling on Him in prayer. He tells us in Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Use the following prayer, or one similar to it, to receive Him now:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe that you died and rose again for me. Please forgive me of my sin, become Lord of my life, and take me to heaven when I die. I am trusting you completely, and in nothing I can do. Thank you Jesus! Amen.

The Area's Most Complete Guide to the Family-Friendly Events You Want to See!

the events calendar

FREE LISTINGS! E-mail your events to: Voice@cox.net; mail to Metro Voice, P.O. 5724, Topeka, KS 66605; fax to 785-235-3340 or enter online at metrovoicenews.com Get your event **Highlighted in Blue in print, our online calendar and promoted in social media for only **\$29!****

CONCERTS

KANSAS PRAIRIE PICKERS – Fourth Sun. ea. Month, 1pm, Auburn Community Center. Foot-stomping, hand-clapping tunes. Concessions available

TOPEKA ACOUSTIC MUSIC JAM – First Sat. of ea. month, 3-5pm, Potwin Presbyterian Church (enters south door), 400 S.W. Washburn: 286-0227 hagen1525@gmail.com.

THE BERRYTON PICKERS – First Sat. of ea. month, 7-9pm, Berryton Baptist Church. Bring snacks, have fun!

GRAND O' OPRY – 2nd & 4th Saturday, 6:30PM-pre-show, 7PM showtime, Ottawa Memorial Auditorium, 301 S Hickory, Ottawa. Tickets are \$10 and only at the door. Ph. 785-214-0013, email grandoopry@gmail.com.

WOOD VALLEY PICKERS – Feb. 4, 7:30pm, Classic Bean, Fairlawn Plaza. Folk & Country, Free admission. 785-271-5005

LEGACY FIVE CONCERT – Mar. 3, 7pm, Wanamaker Woods Nazarene Church, 3501 SW Wanamaker. Freewill offering. Doors open at 6pm. (785) 273-2248. www.facebook.com/events/442753234001223; wwood-snaz@wnnaz.org

STEVE KILE BAND – Mar. 4, 7pm, The Vinewood. Doors open at 6. Cash bar & snacks available! Tickets: \$10 at the door or at thehistoricvinewood.com. 785.260.6772

CHANCE ENCOUNTER – Mar 5, 7pm, The Vinewood. Doors open at 6. Cash bar & snacks available! Tickets: \$10 at the door or at thehistoricvinewood.com. 785.260.6772

LAZY WAYNE – Mar. 12, 7pm, The Vinewood. Doors open at 6. Cash bar & snacks available! Tickets: \$10 at the door or at thehistoricvinewood.com. 785.260.6772

HEAVENLY TRUMPET WITH LARRY CURREY – Mar. 18, 7pm, Morganville School gym, 307 Main, Morganville, KS. Trumpet guest soloist Larry Currey from Colorado

performs his original arrangement of the Leopold Mozart Trumpet Concerto with Community Chamber Orchestra. Tickets are \$8/person or \$18/family, available at Mayo's Dept. Store in Clay Center, or at the door at 6:30 pm. Preorder at www.kansasmusic.net. Please use masks, hand sanitizer. 785) 9264725. baclark@twinvalley.net.

SAVANNAH CHESTNUT – Mar. 19, 7pm, The Vinewood. Doors open at 6. Cash bar & snacks available! Tickets: \$10 at the door or at thehistoricvinewood.com. 785.260.6772

TYPICAL STEREO – Mar. 26, 7pm, The Vinewood. Doors open at 6. Cash bar & snacks available! Tickets: \$10 at the door or at thehistoricvinewood.com. 785.260.6772

STEVE KILE BAND – Apr. 1, 7pm, The Vinewood. Doors open at 6. Cash bar & snacks available! Tickets: \$10 at the door or at thehistoricvinewood.com. 785.260.6772

SWITCH IN TIME – Apr. 2, 7pm, The Vinewood. Doors open at 6. Cash bar & snacks available! Tickets: \$10 at the door or at thehistoricvinewood.com. 785.260.6772

TRAVIS TRITT – April 14, 7:30pm, TPAC

SPECIAL CHURCH EVENTS

SENIOR FIT & FUN PROGRAM – every Mon., Wed., & Fri., 1:30pm, Rolling Hills Christian Church, 4530 NW Hiawatha Place (US Hwy 75 & NW 46th St.) 785-286-0601 or office@rhctopeka.org

HARVESTER'S PROGRAM FOR SENIOR CITIZENS – every second Sat., takes place at Christian Lord Ministries, 2421 SE California. Call 266-4979.

FREE WEEKLY COMMUNITY PANCAKE BREAKFAST – Sundays at 10am sharp, at Oakland Church of the Nazarene: 900 block of NE Oakland, followed by church services at 10:45am - followed at noon by The Hope House FREE Community Food & Clothing Banks.

FIRST WEDNESDAY WESLEY CAFE – First Wed.,

6:15pm, Susanna Wesley UMC, 7433 SW 29th. A worship service will follow at 7:00. 785-478-3697 or www.swumc.org/wesley-cafe-sign-up.html.

FIRST SATURDAY BREAKFAST BUFFET – 7:30 AM - 10:00 AM, Shawnee Heights UMC, 6020 SE 44th

INSIDE OUT FELLOWSHIP – Every Saturday, 6:30pm. Faith Temple Church, 1162 SW Lincoln. For info: 785-380-7031 or rhaggertyjr@hotmail.com

TOPEKA PUBLIC LIBRARY PLAY BUS – Feb. 1, 9:30am-noon, Lakeview Nazarene Church, 2835 Croco. Every Tuesday, enjoy story time, play opportunities, books for check-out & take & make art. 785-266-3247.

GRIEFSHARE SUPPORT GROUP – Feb. 7-May 2, Mondays 6:30-8pm, Topeka Bible Church, Mulvane Building, 1101 SW Mulvane St. A 13-week seminar and support group for people who are grieving the death of a person close to them. The video sessions feature biblical teaching and are designed to help you successfully travel the journey from mourning to joy. 785-234-5545

60TH ANNUAL KANSAS PRAYER BREAKFAST – Mar. 16, 7-8am, Fellowship Bible Church, 6800 SW 10th. Featured Speaker: Rod Handley. \$20/ticket. Sponsorships available. Call or text 785-554-6996 or email ksprayerbreakfast@gmail.com

MARRIAGE | DATE NIGHT - EXTREME BUNCO – Mar. 6:45-8:30pm, elowship Bible Church. Snacks and drinks provided. Childcare is also available. Cost \$25 per couple. Childcare Cost \$2 per child <https://fbc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/1085830>

FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENTS

SENIORS NUTRITIONAL LUNCH – Weekdays, except holidays, at noon at Auburn Civic Center, 1020 N. Washington Street. Minimal cost per person. Reservations/cancellations required 24 hours in

advance by calling Meals on Wheels of Jefferson & Shawnee Co. at 295-3980. Each meal includes 1% milk & sugar-free items for diabetics. 215- 0064.

TOPEKA TWILIGHT LIONS BRANCH CLUB - 4th Mondays at 5:30pm, Norsemen Brewing Co., Visitors welcome.

MEDICARE MONDAYS – First Mon. ea. month, 1-3pm. Topeka/Sh. Co. Public Library, 1515 SW 10th. Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging offers Senior health insurance counseling. For info: 580-4545 or nhonl@tscpl.org

SHEPHERDS CENTER PICKLEBALL GROUP – plays Mon. & Wed. Mon. at Countryside UMC, 32nd & Burlingame, from 3-5. Park on the NORTH side & use the furthest WEST door. Follow the hallway to gym. On Wed. at First Baptist, 30th & MacVicar, from 1-3. Park on the WEST side. Gym is right inside the doors.

TOPEKA SWING DANCE - Tuesdays, 7-8pm, Swing Dance Lessons, no partner required, Jayhawk Theatre, 720 SW Jackson. www.topekaswingdance.com.

SAFE STREETS COALITION MEETING – First Wed. of the month, 11:45am-1pm. Great Overland Station. For info:

266-4606 or jwilson@safeststreets.org

COUNTRY AND BALLROOM DANCING - Thursdays 6-9pm. Croco Hall. Info: Edwina 379-9538 or 478-4760.

SHEPHERDS CENTER LINE DANCING GROUP - meets 2nd & 4th Thur, 2-4 at First UMC, 6th & Topeka. Park on the west side & use west door. Immediately inside, turn left & walk the ramp to the library, then left to elevator. Push [B] for fellowship hall 785-249-3258. .

FIRST FRIDAY ART MARKET – Downtown and NOTO arts district. Arts, antiques, fine crafts, flea market items, snacks & beverages, entertainment and more.

TOPEKA ACAPPELLA UNLIMITED AUDITIONS – Topeka Acapella Unlimited is looking for female singers who would like to sing four part acapella harmonies. Come be our guest via Zoom at our guest nights to meet the Director and learn more about our chorus. Topeka Acapella Unlimited is a Chapter of Sweet Adelines, International. Call Cindy Patton at 785-640-7403 for information on how to receive a Zoom invitation

SQUARE DANCING - Shawnee Swingers has monthly

C5 Alive *Developing and Uniting Christian Leadership*

• Business • Non-profits • Churches

Membership open to all Christian businesses, non-profits, churches & individuals!
Luncheons & Tradeshows & other events open to the general public!

C5Alive POWER Luncheons are held 2nd Thur. each mo.

Mar. 10, 11:30-1: "POWER" Luncheon
at The Peak, 1930 SW Gage.
Featured Speaker: **Huston Thompson!**



RSVP to info@C5Alive.org.
Open to the public.

Save the Dates!

- Apr. 14: **POWER** Luncheon
- Apr. 16: **EASTERFEST**

For info: www.C5Alive.org or [Facebook.com/C5Alive](https://www.facebook.com/C5Alive)

60TH ANNUAL KANSAS PRAYER BREAKFAST

with Leaders in Government, Business, Education, and Industry in Kansas

March 16, 2022 - 7:00 AM CST
Doors Open At 6:30 AM For Breakfast

Wednesday, March 16
Fellowship Bible Church
6800 SW 10th Avenue

Breakfast starts at 6:30 a.m.
Program begins at 7:00 a.m.

Register for \$20 in-person
or
Virtual attendance at no cost
at

www.kansasprayerbreakfast.org

Sponsored by Topeka Fellowship, Inc.

Guest Speakers: Rod Handley & Damion Cooper

Rod Handley is the Founder & President of Character that Counts, a ministry established in 2000. Rod speaks all across the nation to men, women and teenagers about character, integrity and accountability issues. He has written over 30 books including "Character Counts: Who's Counting Yours?" From 1986-1999, he served on the staff of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, including 11 years as the COO/CFO. He has also spoken at hundreds of chapel services for a number of NFL, NBA and MLB teams, including serving as team chaplain for the Kansas City Royals (1995-2009) and the Seattle SuperSonics (1986-89). Rod and his wife Janna live in Lee's Summit, MO and they have four children (ages 21-28). www.characterthatcounts.org

On July 1, 2021, **Damion Cooper** launched Kollektive Company under the umbrella of Character that Counts. He previously served as the Youth Pastor at GracePointe Church in Lee's Summit. Damion's vision is "Reaching the ONE" through love, risk and cultural relativity. It exists to inspire the next generation, to transform leaders and businesses, and advance God's Kingdom. Damion and his wife Krista have two young daughters and they live in Lee's Summit, MO. www.kollektiveco.com



dances and sponsors lessons in the Fall. Call or text 785-845-2357; shawneeswingers@gmail.com. On Facebook: Shawnee Swingers Square Dance Club. wesquadance.com

HARVESTERS MOBILE FOOD PANTRY, 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 2-3pm, Shawnee Heights UMC parking lot.

TERRITORIAL CAPITAL MUSEUM — Now Open, 640 E Woodson, Leocompton. (785) 887-6148 www.leocomptonkans.com historiclecompton@gmail.com

FREE MOBILE FOOD DISTRIBUTION — Fourth Tuesday through November, 9am, 1231 NW Eugene St. Randel Ministries, Inc., in partnership with Harvesters and Family of God Church will be conducting its monthly food distribution. No ID or proof of income required, first come first served. Distributing several tons of fresh produce and other items to families in need. (785) 234-1111 www.RandelMinistries.com

BLEEDING KANSAS - Sundays from Jan. 30-Mar. 6, 2pm, Constitution Hall Historic Site, 319 Elmore, Leocompton. A series of talks and dramatic interpretations on the violent territorial and civil war history of Kansas 1854-1865. Actors will portray Kansans from this turbulent era. Adm: \$3 adults. Children five & younger free.

TOPEKA PUBLIC LIBRARY PLAY BUS — Feb. 1, 9:30am-noon, Lakeview Nazarene Church, 2835 Croco. Every Tuesday, enjoy story time, play opportunities, books for check-out & take & make art. 785-266-3247.

TOPEKA DINO DAYS — Feb. 4 - June 30. SUE: The T. Rex Experience — Great Overland Station [Opens Feb. 4]. See this fearsome fossil all the way from Chicago's Field Museum. **DINO DAYS BASE CAMP** — Topeka Information Center, 715 S Kansas Ave. [Opens Feb. 24] See an Allosaurus and calf at no charge, grab some swag and find out where all of the dino hot spots are throughout town. **DINOSAURS ALIVE!** Created By Dino Don, Inc. — Topeka Zoo. [Opens March 3rd] Dinosaurs are back in a BIG way at the Topeka Zoo. Journey back to the age of dinosaurs in an immersive experience featuring life-size, animatronic prehistoric giants appearing throughout the zoo. **TINY TITANS: Dinosaur Eggs And Babies** — Children's Discovery Center. [Opens February 24th] Visitors will enjoy learning about dinosaur eggs, nests, and babies through colorful, hands-on, interactive experiences that include a collection of real life dinosaur eggs. For tickets and more info: topekadinoday.com/ or (785) 246-6271

TOP CITY DAY OUT — Mar. 2, 10am-3pm, Stormont Vail Events Center. Vendor event benefitting Topeka children's charities.

MY GYM OPEN HOUSE — Mar. 4, 4:30-6:30pm, My Gym, 1921 Gage. Laughter, surprises, activity, new friends, and super sign up deals!

CAPITAL CITY CARNAGE DEMOLITION DERBY — Mar. 4-5, Stormont Vail Events Ctr. stormontvaileventscenter.com or 785-251-5552

LIFE DRAWING SESSION — Mar. 10 & 24, Noto Arts Center. Join us on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month for this open drawing session. We have contracted a live model for artists to work from. Bring your own materials or we have some you can use. Wine and cheese will be provided. 21+ event. Purchase your ticket as attendance is limited. [onebidpal.net/redbudfestival/ticketing\(details:ticketing-summary](http://onebidpal.net/redbudfestival/ticketing(details:ticketing-summary)

C5Alive "POWER" LUNCHEON — Mar. 10, 11:30-1 at The Peak, 1930 SW Gage. Featured Speaker is Huston Thompson.

Cost: \$10 for C5 members & first-time guests who RSVP, \$12 at the door

• \$15 for non-members & repeat guests.

• Please RSVP to info@C5Alive.org, so we know how much food is needed!

Open to the public — Put POWER in your life with great food, great speakers and great company! Invite a friend to join you!

SAVE THE DATE: C5 POWER Luncheon, Apr. 14, 11:30-1.

TOPEKA IRISHFEST — Mar. 12, 10am-5pm, Every Plaza. IrishFest 5k Fun Run, followed by a day of Irish music, food, dancing and a lot of laughter. This year we are on the parade route so bring your family down. The kids can enjoy the parade and Kansas National Guards jousting arena while adult sample Blind Tiger craft beer and authentic Irish music!

60TH ANNUAL KANSAS PRAYER BREAKFAST — Mar. 16, 7-8am, Fellowship Bible Church, 6800 SW 10th. Featured Speaker: Rod Handley. \$20/ticket. Sponsorships available. Call or text 785-554-6996 or email ksprayerbreakfast@gmail.com

SMOKE IN THE SPRING — Apr. 8-9, Osage City. Taste of Osage city BBQ and fun.

7th ANNUAL EASTERFEST: TOPEKA EASTER PARADE & FUN FAIR — Apr. 16, 10am-3pm, North Kansas Avenue & Garfield Park. Topeka's annual Easter Parade will begin at 10am at the tracks in NOTO and proceed north on Kansas Avenue past Garfield Park. Egg Hunt begins right after the parade at the playground in Garfield Park. Food Trucks will be on hand and the Family Fun Fair, Vendor Market with Bingo, and Health Fair will be 10-3 in Garfield Park, in the Shelter House and in the Gym, including vendor booths, children's games, food, facepainting, pony rides, laser tag, bubble soccer, cake walk and more. Bands, gymnastics, ballet and other entertainment will be on hand. For

info: info@C5Alive.org or 640-6399.

MEETINGS & CLASSES

CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA MEETING - Join other concerned individuals to pray and unite in action for Shawnee Co. and our Nation. For info about monthly meetings: 785-260-5659 or ks.cwfa.org.

HEAT UP TOPEKA - Free fitness classes; learn and build healthy social & eating habits. Held at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 4746 SW 21st St. Florence Crittenton: 785-233-0516 www.flocritkans.org

TOPEKA TREASURE HUNTERS CLUB - 3rd Sun. of each month except May, Sep. & Dec., 7pm, Papan's Landing Senior Center, 618 NW Paramore St. Family Memberships include children & grandchildren up to 18 yrs. A place to meet friends to discuss all aspects of Metal Detecting, club business, plus socializing & entertainment.

DEAF WORSHIP SERVICE — 3rd Sun., 3pm, Faith Lutheran Church, 17th & Gage. Also, every Sun. 9:30am service is interpreted.

FAMILY EXPERIENCE (FX) — Every Sun., 6:01pm, Fairlawn Church of Nazarene, 730 Fairlawn Rd. A time of high intensity, action packed, skit mania, worship music all centered around the word of God for 45 minutes. A free family worship event. For info: Emily Moore, 272-6322 or fxthelawn@gmail.com.

BOY'S TRAIL LIFE & AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS TROUPE — Every Mon. 6pm, Cornerstone Comm. Ch., 7620 SW 21st. Faith-based scouting programs, age 5-18. Register at cornerstonetopeka.com. 478-2929.

TOPEKA MANKIND PROJECT — Mondays, 6:30pm, 2112 SW Morningside Rd. Supports men in becoming their best selves, including physical, mental & emotional health & wellness. Open to any man. Brian Thomas: brian.thomas01@gmail.com or 785-727-9439

THE FORCE (Students Taking Action) — 1st Mon. & 3rd Tue., 6:30-8pm, Safe Streets, 2209 SW 29th St. Committed to being alcohol & drug free. Associate with like-minded peers, plan activities & get involved in the community. Youth 12-18 invited. 266-4606.

HEARTLAND HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS — 2nd Mon., 11:45am-1pm. Promoting neighborhood well-being by mobilizing people, ideas & resources. 233-1365.

TOPEKA LINCOLN CLUB — 1st Tue. of month, 7pm, Topeka Public Library. Discussing our greatest President, Abraham Lincoln, and his times. The public is welcome. For info, contact Kirk Nystrom 235-6977.

OUR LADY OF THE FAITHFUL — 1st Tues., 6:30pm Mass followed by Dinner, Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic Church. A Catholic group for those in their 20-30s. Michelle Ann 580-3071 or ourladyofthefaithful@gmail.com. Facebook: "Ourladyofthefaithful"

SUNRISE OPTIMIST CLUB — Every Tue., 6:30am, Sunrise Optimist Complex, 720 NW 50th St. 246-1291.

MENNINGER BIBLE CLASSES - Tuesdays 11am-12:30. Amerus Room, YWCA, 225 West 12th. A new study group for Year One of Flo Menninger's course on Four Years through the Bible. Read and discuss Genesis through First Kings. Nominal charge for materials. For info call the YWCA at 233-1750 or Clara Gamache at 785-408-5433. (The Bible study is also taught on Sat. mornings on 101.5 FM radio.)

FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES Aerie 4319: First & Third Tue. 7pm; Auxiliary: Third & Fourth Tue. month 6pm, 2941 SE Fremont Street. The Fraternal Order of Eagles is an international non-profit organization uniting fraternally in the spirit of liberty, truth, justice, and equality, to make human life more desirable by lessening its ills and promoting peace, prosperity, gladness and hope. www.foe.com 785-266-7307

O.W.L.S. (Older Wise Loving Saints) - meets the second Tuesday of the month. Location varies and can be found at www.faithfamilylife.com

S.W.A.G. (Spiritual Warriors Anointed by God) youth group - Wed at 7:00 p.m. 3710 NW Topeka Blvd.

AWANA — Every Wed., 6-8pm, First Southern Baptist Church, 1912 SW Gage Blvd. Bible based program for children & youth ages 3-HS. For info: 272-0443.

AWANA — Every Wed., 6:30pm, Bethel Baptist Church, 4011 N. Kansas Ave. Bible based program for children & youth ages 3-HS. For info: 286-0467.

AWANA — Every Wed., 6:30-8pm, Auburn Christian Church. Bible based program for children & youth ages 3-HS. For info: 256-2515.

TOPEKA PRAYER GROUP — Every Wed., 6:30pm, 409 SW Buchanan St. Do you believe that God hears and answers prayers? Do you believe Jesus wants to lead His people by His Holy Spirit? Come join us in prayer as we seek His face for answers and direction. 785-845-1948; holmie2@sbcglobal.net

VIP LUNCHEON FOR SENIORS — Every Wed., 10:45 Bible Study and meal at Noon, Topeka Church of the Brethren, 3201 NW Rochester Rd. (1 mile north of Dillon's North). FREE lunch with Christian fellowship, devotions & entertainment provided by Topeka North Outreach. Free will donations accepted. For info: 785-224-8803 or vip@topekanorthoutreach.org

MACHINE EMBROIDERY CLUB — 1st Wed., 9am-3pm, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 2021 SW 29th Street (east door). Anyone with an Embroidery machine is invited to attend, there are no dues or formal meeting agenda. Lunch is on your own. Teach each other, enjoy fellowship & complete projects. Call 379-5159.

SAFE STREETS MEETING — 1st Wed., 11:45am, Great

Overland Station 266-4606.

STUDENT IMPACT — Every Wed., 6-8pm, First Southern Baptist, 1912 SW Gage Blvd. Youth games, teaching, worship, small groups. For info: 272-0443.

CHRISTIAN CHALLENGE — Every Thurs. 7-9pm, First Southern Baptist, 1912 SW Gage Blvd. Worship for college students.

INTENTIONAL MOM — 1st & 3rd Thurs., 9-11:30am, Topeka Bible Church Auditorium, 1135 SW College. For all moms, helping them to be intentional! 234-5545.

OPERATION BACKPACK — 1st Thurs., 6pm, Indian Creek Elementary School, 4303 NE Indian Creek Rd. Volunteers gather to assemble Weekend Snack Sacks for low-income students. No assembly in August. Sponsored by Topeka North Outreach. For info: 286-1370.

TOPEKA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY — 4th Thurs., 7pm, Topeka Shawnee County Public Library, 1515 SW 10th St. No program in Nov. or Dec. Promotes & stimulates the education, knowledge & interest of the membership & the public in family history, genealogical records & research. 233-5762 or tgstopeka.org.

KINGDOM ADVISORS TOPEKA AREA STUDY GROUP — 3rd Thu., 11:30am, Northland Christian Church, 3102 NW Topeka Blvd. Christian financial professionals: financial planners, accountants, attorney's & insurance agents invited. kingdomadvisors.org or JimHanna,james.c.hanna@ampf.com or 357-6278 x19.

TOPEKA (Downtown) OPTIMIST CLUB — Every Fri., noon, Top of the Tower. Serving the youth of Topeka. Anyone welcome. For info: 272-1099 or fosterm60@yahoo.com.

TOPS (Taking Off Pounds Sensibly) -- Every Fri. 8:30 to 10:00 am at 3221 SW Burlingame Road. 800-932-

8677. Support for your weight loss journey. tops.org

A GOOD YARN CLUB — 2nd & 4th Sat., 9-11am, Wana-maker Rd Baptist Church, 2700 SW Wanamaker. Doing Good for Others: Knitting & Crocheting for Local Charities, free yarn, needles, hooks & patterns. All are welcome. Anne, 272-9249 or kittens812@sbcglobal.net

BIBLE QUIZZING — 1st Sat. Learn God's Word & have fun with area Christian youth age 9-19. YFC/YEA style quizzing & rules. 913-593-6427 or biblequizzing.org.

MONTHLY SCORE MEETING — 1st Sat., 8-9:30am, Washburn Tech, 5724 SW Huntoon (enter east doors facing Huntoon). No RSVP or fee is required. Small business owners are invited to a Breakfast Roundtable discussion with members of SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives). Info: 234-3049.

TOPEKA GREAT LIGHT AGLOW — For meeting info contact Vickie Lynch at greatlighttopeka@gmail.com.

SUPPORT GROUPS

BINDING UP THE BROKEN HEARTED — Sessions offered for women who suffer from the after-effects of abortion. All the women who lead these sessions have had an abortion and have received healing from God's Word. For info, contact local Healing Hearts representative Shelly Brush, First Southern Baptist Church at shelly.b@healinghearts.org. All communication is confidential and secure.

MIDLAND CARE GRIEF SUPPORT Groups: Building A, 200 SW Frazier Circle; Every Mon., 4-5pm: 12 Week Adult Group for Recent Loss — 1st and 3rd Thu., 10:30am & 5:30pm—Ongoing Adult Group — 1st and 3rd Thu., 5:30pm: Ongoing Young Adult Group (4-18 years of age) For All Groups: Call for start dates and info packet. Group and individual grief support

available upon request. Info: 785-232-2044 ext.341

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS - Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging provides an opportunity for caregivers to get together and share their ideas and feelings. 2nd Monday of the month, 3:30pm, Topeka public library, Anton Rm. 3rd Friday of the month, 12 noon, Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, 2910 SW Topeka

ABORTION RECOVERY SUPPORT — Providing services for women & men who suffer from Post-Abortion Syndrome. Kay Lyn at KLCarlson20@cox.net.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS — for friends & families of alcoholics. 785-409-3072 or topekaanon.org

PURSUIT FOR SEXUAL PURITY — Men struggling with pornography & sexual addiction. This bible study/accountability group uses the Pure Desire book by Ted Roberts. For info: 249-9509. All inquiries confidential.

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUPS — Monthly support group meetings for caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. All of our programs have moved from in-person to virtual.

Caregiver support group via Skype 9:30am every other Wednesday. Email Hayley Young at hdyoung@alz.org or call 785.379.3067 for the meeting link and other info.

Caregiver Support Group via Google Hangouts, 4:30pm every other Wednesday. Email Hayley Young at hdyoung@alz.org or call 785.379.3067 for the meeting link and other info.

BIKERS AGAINST CHILD ABUSE — NE Kansas Chapter (B.A.C.A.) 3rd Sun., 4 pm American Legion, 3800 SE Michigan. Open to the public. For info: 817-5801.

COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS/BEREAVED PARENTS GROUP — Meets 4th Mon. in Formation classroom at Most Pure Heart of Mary, 17th & Stone. Discussion

BLEEDING KANSAS

PROGRAM SERIES 2022

CONSTITUTION HALL STATE HISTORIC SITE | HISTORIC LECOMPTON

2 p.m. Sundays • Suggested donation \$3 adults

A series of talks and dramatic interpretations on the violent territorial and civil war of Kansas and the nation, 1854-1865

<p>JANUARY 30</p> <p>FEBRUARY 6</p> <p>FEBRUARY 13</p> <p>FEBRUARY 20</p> <p>FEBRUARY 27</p> <p>MARCH 6</p>	<p>"Kansas Day" Faces of the Free State House: The First General Assembly of the Territory of Kansas, Legally Elected by the People by author and educator Bill McFarland & educator Tim Nedean <i>Special Unveiling of a Group Portrait Identifying Each Member of the 1857-1858 Kansas House of Representatives, the First-Ever Antislavery Majority to Convene in Kansas at Leocompton in Constitution Hall</i></p> <p>President John Calhoun: Chief Architect of the "Leocompton Swindle" by T. Kevin Griffin, Major (Retired) & MA</p> <p>Smoky Hill Thompson: A Life Wild and Perilous by Donald Wade Davis, independent author and scholar</p> <p>Civil War Order No. 11 - Desperate Days and Hard Travel: Recollections of Women by Peggy Buhr, Director, Bates County, Missouri Historical Society and Museum</p> <p>The Life and Times of Ross Burns: Accidental Linn County Pioneer and Civil War Hero by Bryce Benedict, J.D., author and retired National Guardsman historian.</p> <p>"The Trial of Jefferson Davis and the Issue of Secession" a first-person portrayal by reenactor Lane Smith.</p>
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3rd Thurs., 11am, Lunch After Loss, Paisano's Ristorante, Fleming Place, SW 10th & Gage Blvd., For reservations or info: 785-271-6500.

EMOTIONS ANONYMOUS: a 12-step program for those suffering with emotional instability such as depression, anxiety, grief, etc. Meets every Tues. at Grace Episcopal Cathedral, Noon-1pm. For info: Sharon 785-633-7764

FIBROMYALGIA & CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP – 2nd Tue., 7-9pm. First Congregational Church, 17th and Collins. For info: Randy at 785-969-4038 or TopekaCFS@outlook.com.

GRANDPARENT/RELATIVE CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP – 3rd Tue., 6:30-8pm, 2nd floor meeting room, St. Francis Hosp., 1700 SW 7th. For info: Sharla, 286-2329; Jennie (English/Spanish) 231-0763.

"HEALING AFTER THE SUICIDE OF A LOVED ONE" ("HEAL") – or Survivors of Suicide ("SOS). 1st & 3rd Tue., 7-8:30pm, Pozez Education Center of Stormont Vail Hospital, 1505 SW 8th St. Serving anyone who has lost a loved one by suicide.

PRISON OUTREACH MINISTRY – Every Tue., 7-9pm, Topeka Women's Prison, 815 Rice Rd. Reaching out to those who can't come in, finding freedom behind bars, inspiring inmates to seek salvation during a difficult time. Providing support & guidance through the Holy Spirit to offer strength. Director: Don Garner, 286-0489 or faithfamilylifeministries@gmail.com.

GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS – Every Wed, 7pm, St. Francis Hospital, meeting room #8.

MOMS-IN-TOUCH PRAYER GROUP – Every Wed., 2:30-3:30pm, Library at Cair Paravel-Latin School. Experience God's power through prayer as we lift our students, teachers, staff, administrators & board up to the Lord. For info: 357-0369.

DIVORCECARE PROGRAMS – (For updates check www.divorcecare.org) locations and times:

WED. – 6:30pm, Topeka Bible Church, 1101 SW Mulvane. Cost: \$15. Child care provided. For info: 379-0505 or www.divorcecare.org.

WED. – 6:45 – 8:45pm, Walnut View Christian Church, 3634 SE 37th St. (just East of 37th & Croco). Cost: \$10 registration (scholarships available). The video seminar series featuring some of the nation's foremost experts on divorce and recovery topics, combined with support group discussion of the materials. Complimentary child care children up to the fifth grade. Info: 266-7550 or walnutviewcc@att.net.

WED. – 6:30pm, Northland Christian Church, 3102 NW Topeka Blvd. No Cost. 286-1204, www.northland.cc

PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP – 1st Thurs., 7pm, Saint Francis Hospital 2nd floor conf. room of the cancer unit. For info: 266-9533.

CELEBRATE RECOVERY – Every Fri., 6pm, 1912 Gage Blvd. A Christ-centered program, based on 8 principles found in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Applying these Biblical principles, become free from addictive & dysfunctional behaviors. crtopekaks.org.

NICOTINE ANONYMOUS – Every Fri., 6:30pm, Town & Country Church Renaissance Room, 4925 SW 29th St., use west door cross red foot bridge. A fellowship of men & women helping each other to live free of nicotine. No fees. 402-321-486; Laboomaha@att.net

TOPEKA NAR-ANON FAMILY GROUP – For families & friends who are affected by someone else's narcotic addiction. Every Sat., noon-1:15 pm, rm. A, 1st Baptist Church, 3033 SW MacVicar, enter on S. side, door A. www.naranonmidwest.org

COVENANT KEEPERS – 3rd Sat. Group for people who want to see their marriage saved when their spouse wants out. For info: 816-453-0884 or 816-966-0927.

Chinese government rewriting Bible to fit communist agenda

The Chinese government is rewriting the Bible in accordance with communist values, The Voice of the Martyrs warned.

"This is a project that the Chinese Communist Party announced in 2019," Todd Nettleton told "Faithwire." "At the time, they said it would be about a 10-year process to release a new translation of the Bible. This new translation would really support the Communist Party."

In a recent Facebook post, the organization pointed out that the Chinese revisions of the Bible will include "core socialist values" and removal of passages that "do not reflect communist beliefs." One example of the changes was revealed in a high school textbook released in September 2020. The party changed several verses in John 8 in which Jesus forgives an adulterous woman despite the Pharisees' calls to stone her to death under Mosaic law. The communist translation, however, alters the story so Christ ends up stoning the woman as he admits, "I am also a sinner."

Nettleton found it shocking that the rewritten passage diminishes Jesus' divinity. "In one sense, it's just like so arrogant to think, 'I'm going to rewrite

the story of Jesus,' but then you think about denying the deity of Christ," he said. "If Jesus is a sinner, then he's not God."

He believes the purpose of the revisions is to demonstrate the communist party's attempt to lessen Christianity's influence on some of its citizens.

"The issue for the Chinese Communist Party is control," he said. "It is always about control. And they see the Christian message as something that would take control away from the communist party."

In response, The Voice of the Martyrs hopes to send more copies of God's word to believers in China.

"That's one of the reasons why Voice of the Martyrs and other groups are so committed to delivering Bibles into China -- even smuggling Bibles into China -- because it's not available," Nettleton said. "One of the things I hope about this new translation is that it will backfire and people will wonder, 'Why was it so important for the Chinese government to retranslate the Bible? Why was it so important for them to change this?'"



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REVIEW: In Cyrano, love is a verb

In Joe Wright's 2022 musical version of the 1897 play *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Peter Dinklage plays the titular character, trading witty barbs, lovely poems, and rapier thrusts with the rest of the characters created by Edmond Rostand. Wright directs the story of unrequited love, basing his version on Erica Schmidt's stage musical. Compelling, heartfelt, and well-balanced, the story is uplifting and tragic, funny and serious, playful and powerful.

de Bergerac is in love with Haley Bennett's Roxanne, but she's in love with Kelvin Harrison Jr.'s Christian. Off to the side, the pompous Duke de Guiche (Ben Mendelsohn at his smartiest) wants Roxanne for himself, but she can see right through his cumbersome advances, rejecting him again and again. What she can't see through is the poetry that Christian ends up passing off as his own — for those unfamiliar with the story or Steve Martin's comedy *Roxanne – de Bergerac* does all of the romantic thinking!

Part-Shakespearean, part-rom/com, *Cyrano* uses music beautifully, even as Dinklage battle raps while actually battling with swords. Wright is no stranger to period pieces, having delivered *Pride* and



Prejudice, *Pan*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Darkest Hour*, alongside his Academy Award-winning film *Atonement*. The sets sparkle, the costumes reflect the ridiculousness of the court and all its trappings, setting up the actors to deliver an old-themed story with love that we can all relate to over time and space.

Rather than appearing quaint because of its setting, *Cyrano* leaves us wanting more, wanting better, for the poet and his muse. Unfortunately, this is a tragic play, too, and not everything ends well for everyone. There is a poetic justice though, to the way that *de Bergerac* writes poetry afraid he won't be accepted — and how

he's accepted and loved by Christians in the story because of his heart. He's loved not "in spite of" his appearance, but rather as a whole person. They embrace him with grace even if he lacks grace for himself.

Wright and Co. have delivered a solid entry into the use of the old story, and potentially a few Award wins before it's all said and done. At the very least, they've shared a vision for what real love looks like, and challenged us to cherish the opportunities that we have to experience love and to show it to others.

—By Jacob Sahms | Dove.org Used with permission.

Candace Cameron Bure on Rejecting Projects: 'I Know That God's In Control'

After 10 holiday Hallmark movies, actress Candace Cameron Bure earned her "Christmas queen" title.

The *FULL HOUSE* star said that she feels additional expectations and pressure when she does a holiday movie.

In Bure's recent Christmas movie, *THE CHRISTMAS CONTEST*, she stars alongside fellow *FULLER HOUSE* actor John Brotherton.

"I did feel an immense amount of pressure [last year] as every movie does well in the ratings," Bure told *Us Weekly*. "And then you always want to hit that mark and exceed that mark. And last year, I finally let it go because it's not the reason why I make these movies."

Bure, an outspoken Christian, said that it is essential that she makes family-friendly entertainment.

"I make them because I love them," Cameron Bure said of her holiday flicks. "And I know that the viewers that watch them really love them, and they mean something to them. I always try to make it the best that I can, but I let the pressure go last year."

"It made making this one that much better because I just enjoyed it," she added. "And, you know, I'm trying not to think about all the other markers. Let it be what it is and enjoy it."

Despite Bure's work in Hollywood, she

said that her faith is her priority.

"My faith is really the foundation of who I am," the actress told Fox News in a previous interview. "It's so important to me, and it's always a part of me, whether it's at home and privately, or when I'm reading the Bible in Bible study. But also at work, and the choices I make within work, and the companies I choose to work with and the projects that I choose to take on."

"The Bible to me is truth," Cameron Bure added. "I can always go back to the word of God and find the hope, the encouragement, the positivity, the trust that I know I have in Jesus. And so it never fails, even when life doesn't go the way I want it to or had planned it to. I know that God's in control of everything."

"I live by faith in everything, in everything that I do, and every aspect of my life. So it's not just something that I rely on or is a crutch. I mean, it is genuinely who I am. How does it help me? It's hard to say because it's just a part of my being."

Bure said that she turned down several roles because they were contrary to her beliefs.

"I've had a lot of those, passing on projects, saying no to projects because they didn't feel right for me," Bure revealed. "And a lot of those were because of the boundaries that I've created for myself."

What Lord of the Rings and Harry Potter teach us about power

My dad gave me J.R.R. Tolkien's book *The Fellowship of the Ring*, and the book awakened my mind and imagination in ways I didn't fully understand at the time. For many years as a child, I didn't like to read much, but the *Lord of the Rings* changed that.

I began devouring books, starting with more Tolkien, and then moving to other fantasies written by Terry Brooks, Robert Jordan, and Frank Herbert. Then came a historical fiction phase—James Clavell's masterpieces (*Shogun*, *Tai Pan*, and *Noble House*), Ken Follet's *Pillars of the Earth*, Colleen McCullough's *The Masters of Rome* series, and even some Gary Jennings. That was followed by a thirst for the great authors: Twain, Tolstoy, Hemingway, Shakespeare, Nabokov, and so on.

My enjoyment of Tolkien never faded over the years, however. I'll crack open his books every five or ten years and slip back into Middle Earth like a warm, familiar bath. One of the reasons I reread Tolkien's saga is the books speak to me today in a way they didn't when I was 11, when my favorite scenes involved Legolas and Gimli smiting orcs at the Battle of Helm's Deep (and keeping score).

While many would say the primary message of the story is love—the friendship and loyalty between Sam and Frodo is one of the most enduring relationships in literature—Tolkien's philosophy on the danger and corrupting influence of power is what underpins the story.

Tolkien once said the One Ring symbolized the futility of trying to improve the world through force.

"You can make the Ring an allegory of our own time, if you like," Tolkien wrote to his publisher in 1947, "an allegory of the inevitable fate that awaits all attempts to

defeat evil power by power."

That the One Ring was an allegory for the corrupting influence of power is no secret, of course. It's literally called the Ring of Power, and the allegory is not subtle. We see it corrupt Boromir, the Prince of Gondor, who would use the power of the ring to smash Sauron and his minions of Mordor. Nevertheless, Tolkien's allegory remains important, because modern man—like poor Boromir—seems bewitched by power. This has never been more true than today, where governments across the entire world have unleashed the immense power of the state to suppress a dangerous respiratory virus.

The results of this "public health" experiment could not have been more catastrophic—not if Boromir had succeeded in seizing the Ring of Power and marched to the gates of Mordor.

'With That, We'd Be Invincible'

I hadn't thought about the Ring of Power in some time, but it crossed my mind recently when I finished watching the *Harry Potter* films with my family.

In many ways, J.K. Rowling's epic fantasy could not be more different than Tolkien's. It's a darker tale, and its primary characters are children who shuttle back and forth between present day England and a British boarding school of magic in a parallel world. Tolkien, a Christian, likely would have been uncomfortable with its emphasis on witchcraft and the "Harry Potter allegorical Jesus" thing.

On one important element, however, Rowling and Tolkien seemed to see eye-to-eye.

Near the very end of the *Harry Potter* films, after the villain is vanquished, viewers learn that Harry is the master of the "Elder Wand"—the most powerful wand

in existence, a weapon created by Death himself. Ron Weasley immediately goes a little Boromir when he learns Harry commands the power of the Elder Wand.

Ron: What do you reckon we should do with it?

Hermione: "We"?

Ron Weasley: I'm just saying, that's the Elder Wand, the most powerful wand in the world. With that, we'd be invincible.

rings

Notice that Ron doesn't ask Harry what he's going to do with the wand. He asks, what should we do with it? It's clear Ron wants the Elder Wand, and implies he should get to decide how it's power is used even though it's not his.

The hero of the story takes a different approach. Without a word, Harry snaps the wand in two. Like George Washington, the American Cincinnatus, Harry is the one strong enough to walk away from power.

Rowling's suspicion of power is commendable, as is the current of anti-authoritarianism that runs throughout her stories. Yet Tolkien's story suggests he understood the trappings of power even better.

Unlike Harry Potter, Frodo fails the power test. Our noble little hobbit just can't bring himself to cast the One Ring into the fires of Mount Doom even though he's journeyed hundreds of leagues to do precisely that, risking death and suffering mightily the entire way. The Ring of Power defeats our humble hobbit hero. Frodo is only saved by the miserable creature Gollum, who violently (and gruesomely) takes the ring from Frodo before falling to his own doom.

The Lesson

The fear of power that permeates *The Lord of the Rings* and the *Harry Potter*

stories was shared by the Founders of the American system, who understood that no institution on earth has more power than government.

"The essence of Government is power; and power, lodged as it must be in human hands, will ever be liable to abuse," James Madison noted in an 1829 speech.

This is why Madison and his fellow architects of the American system created checks and balances throughout the constitutional framework. The different branches of government would serve as checks on each other, while the federal government would have few and clearly defined responsibilities, and be chained down by a series of Amendments (the Bill of Rights) enumerating not what the government could do, but explicitly stating what the government could not do. And they left little clue as to where the rest of the power would lie.

"The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people," the Tenth Amendment of the Constitution reads.

As simple and obvious as Madison's observation was, many people fail to see the connection between government and power. Many will wax on about the dangers and corrupting influence of power, but fully support giving the gov-


ernment more and more.

Tolkien, it should be noted, was not one of these people.

"My political opinions lean more and more to Anarchy (philosophically understood, meaning abolition of control not whiskered men with bombs)," he wrote in a 1943 letter to his son, Christopher. "The most improper job of any man, even saints (who at any rate were at least unwilling to take it on), is bossing other men. Not one in a million is fit for it, and least of all those who seek the opportunity."

These are the words of someone who understood Madison's observation. The essence of government is power, and power corrupts and destroys.

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'Little House on the Prairie,' free on Peacock, fills classic TV void

By Michael Foust

Editor's note: This monthly series, "5 Family-Friendly Things," spotlights five family-friendly entertainment choices on film, DVDs, streaming or television.

Fans of classic television let out a collective groan in January when they woke up in a new year and discovered that one of their favorite series -- The Andy Griffith Show -- had disappeared from Amazon Prime Video.

No longer could they watch the adventures of Andy and Barney for free as part of their Prime subscription. Even worse: The hit series didn't land on another major streaming platform, either.

But classic TV fans shouldn't fret, because there are plenty of solid options in the streaming world -- including a major new one that is completely free.

My go-to for old-time television in recent weeks has been Little House on the Prairie, which is streaming on the free side of Peacock TV and follows the trials and triumphs of the Ingalls family in 1870s Minnesota. All nine seasons are available on the platform.

The series -- as you likely know -- is based on a biographical book by Laura Ingalls Wilder and aired on NBC from 1974 to 1983. It starred Michael Landon as Charles Ingalls, Karen Grassle as Caroline Ingalls and Melissa Gilbert as Laura Ingalls.

A winner of four Primetime Emmys, Little House on the Prairie was a family-centric drama that taught viewers about contentment, determination and love.

The Ingalls worked hard for everything they owned while exhibiting joy and peace amidst hardship.

It's a series that has plenty of lessons for our rich, me-centric Western world.

Little House isn't the only classic show on Peacock TV. While there, you may want to check out The Dick Van Dyke Show, The Carol Burnett Show and Highway to Heaven. All are free.

Of course, you'll have to endure a few commercials on the free side of Peacock TV. But for the price, it's

probably worth it.

Peacock TV is available at PeacockTV.com and on all major streaming platforms.

Also worth watching this month:

Freelancers, Season Two (Angel Studios) -- A group of quirky friends run a video production company on a shoestring budget. This hilarious family-friendly comedy series was released by the same company, Angel Studios, that was behind The Chosen. Season Two is available on the Angel Studios app. (Season One tallied 7 million views on YouTube.)

Home Sweet Home Alone (Disney Plus) -- A boy is left alone at home during the Christmas season and must fend off two burglars who are trying to steal a high-priced toy. It's the latest chapter in the Home Alone franchise and includes a new cast, although one character in the old movies -- the bully brother named "Buzz" -- is now a policeman. Rated TV-PG.

Despicable Me / Despicable Me 2 (Netflix) -- A heartless outlaw named Gru (Steve Carell) hatches a plan to steal the moon in order to become the world's most famous supervillain. His outlook on life, though, is dramatically changed when he adopts three young girls who soften his heart. The first two films in the Despicable Me franchise entered the Netflix lineup Feb. 1. Both films are rated PG for rude humor and mild action. Animated.

The Jesus Music/Show Me the Father (Home Video) -- The two best faith-based documentaries of 2021 are now on home video. The Jesus Music, directed by Jon and Andrew Erwin, tells the history of contemporary Christian music, beginning in the 1960s. Show Me the Father, produced by Alex and Stephen Kendrick, spotlights the fatherhood of God alongside inspiring stories of earthly fathers.

Michael Foust has covered the intersection of faith and entertainment for more than 15 years. He is the husband to Julie and the father of four young children.

'Duck Dynasty' star warns of dangers of cancel culture

Phil Robertson, the star of "Duck Dynasty," understands the dangers of cancel culture from his own experience.

Robertson, who released his new book, "Uncanceled: Finding Meaning and Peace in a Culture of Accusations, Shame, and Condemnation," this week, told Fox News Digital about the backlash he received for mentioning that homosexuality is a sin during a 2013 interview with "GQ Magazine."

At the time, the magazine asked Robertson what he considered to be sinful. In response, the 75-year-old said, "Start with homosexual behavior and just morph out from there. Bestiality, sleeping around with this woman and that woman and that woman, and those men."

Robertson also shared a paraphrased version of 1 Corinthians 6:9, saying, "Don't be deceived. Neither the adulterers, the idolaters, the male prostitutes, the homosexual offenders, the greedy, the drunkards, the slanderers, the swindlers -- they won't inherit the kingdom of God. Don't deceive yourself. It's not right."

Following the interview, A&E indefinitely suspended Robertson from his reality television show. The network later would reinstate him following a wave of



support, including 1.5 million likes on a Facebook page calling for the show's boycott until Robertson's suspension was lifted.

Robertson holds no hard feelings toward the network and those who canceled him. He also told Fox News Digital that he did not regret doing the interview.

"No regrets at all -- none," he said. "I just went on. I never called A&E and said, 'What are you doing?' I never said a word when they came to visit me about 10 days after this all went down. I said, 'Guys, did y'all ever hear from me with some kind of

irate phone call? 'Cause you were firing me?' They said, 'Mr. Robertson, you never said a word.'"

Robertson said his faith has remained a constant presence in his life, even through tough times.

"The Apostle Paul told Timothy that whoever lives a godly life in Christ will be persecuted," he said. "So we take persecution as a badge of honor. It doesn't bother us at all. We just take it in and say, 'I don't hold it against anyone.' Instead, we focus on telling others about Jesus and keep moving."

National Christian Foundations creates fund for givers to support "The Chosen"

The multi-season television series "The Chosen" has taken the streaming world by storm with its unconventional approach to the gospel narrative and crowd-funded production model. In November 2019, season one was released, fully funded by more than 16,000 people who contributed \$11 million in record time, making it the largest crowd-funded media project in history.

With more than 356 million views and counting, the show has been translated into 50 different languages so people all over the world can watch the story of Jesus unfold in their heart language. Like many of the show's initial viewers, Robert and Karrie Bloomquist began their support by visiting "The Chosen" app to make a donation to "pay it forward," a system the producers set up to enable viewers to for future episodes. But as time went by, they wanted to make larger, tax-deductible gifts.

That's when they learned that The Chosen team had collaborated with the National Christian Foundation and Impact Foundation to facilitate grants from fans who wanted to support the show's mission with donations ranging into the millions. "Through NCF's ecosystem of likeminded partners, we were able to easily invest charitable funds in this venture for maximum return," Robert said.

Through an impact investment fund set up with NCF, givers are helping underwrite the creation of a roughly \$20 million production complex on a 1,200-acre camp owned by the Salvation Army in Midlothian, Texas. Complete with a soundstage the size of a football field, flanked by a cafeteria



and workshops for sets and costumes, "The Chosen" will pay rent to use these facilities, which also are intended to accommodate other faith-based film and TV productions.

According to Adam Swerdlow, chief operation officer for "The Chosen," the generosity of NCF givers has been a gamechanger for the project. "NCF has given us a way for people to get a tax-deductible donation and also support

the building of our permanent home, which will be huge for us and other faith-based projects down the road," he said. "We're creating films about Jesus, and the quality of the production value has increased drastically from season one to season two

"Now we're heading into season three, and there's an expectation to raise the bar. So we need these facilities to continue to create even better content."



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How Do You Choose Quality Vitamins and Supplements?

More than half of Americans take an over-the-counter vitamin or dietary supplement, but many may not realize that the quality of these products can vary greatly. Because supplements are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration like other medicines, not all are quality products. When choosing a vitamin or other supplement, checking for independent verification can help ensure quality.

A recent study in the "Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine" found that the amount of actual melatonin in 71% of supplements is off by a 10% margin, meaning that labels of many melatonin substances do not accurately reflect how much melatonin is in the pill. The study also found the amount of melatonin within pills in a single jar can vary by 465%. This incident illustrates the value of verification, which confirms what is on the label is what is in the bottle.

Measures of Quality

The following are some of the characteristics to consider when evaluating the quality of a dietary supplement:

- **Positive Identification:** There are products on the market that do not contain the ingredients indicated on the label. Tests by an independent third party can confirm that what is on the label is in the bottle.

- **Potency:** It is crucial that ingredients are present in the right amount. Too little may have no effect on your health, while too much may be harmful.

- **Purity:** Unwanted ingredients can have a negative effect on health. Examples may include heavy metals, mold or mildew, and chemicals from pesticides.

- **Performance:** A pill or tablet must properly dissolve, or else ingredients cannot be absorbed by the body. In that case, it is more likely to pass through your system without any effect on your health.

Another example is saw palmetto extract, a supplement commonly used to support prostate health and help to reduce frequent urination. Studies indicate that not all saw palmetto products are the same. Differences in purity, potency and quality among the various available saw palmetto products are thought to affect the usefulness of these

supplements.

"As with any supplement, a consumer should look for the most reliable option," said Ed Wyszumiala, head of the Dietary Supplement Verification Program at U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP). "Only consistent and quality saw palmetto extracts have been shown to be effective based on clinical research. Therefore, consumers seeking a quality dietary supplement can feel confident choosing products with third-party verification, such as Flomomentum, the only saw palmetto extract supplement that has been independently verified by USP."

How to Make Supplements Part of a Healthy Daily Routine

Following a few simple guidelines can make it easy to include supplements as part of your daily routine.

1. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any supplements, as they may interact with your prescription medications.

2. Do your homework on the manufacturer to make sure it is a reputable company that adheres to good manufacturing practices and does not appear to be the subject of frequent consumer complaints.

3. Avoid companies making questionable claims about curing diseases and do your research on the science behind the products.

4. Carefully follow the directions on the labels, so you take the supplement exactly as intended.



Tests by an independent third party can confirm that what is on the label is in the bottle. Learn more about quality supplements

and check whether your products are USP Verified at QualitySupplements.org/Verified-Products.

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Over 65? Time to Assess Risk of Pneumococcal Pneumonia

Now, more than ever, you're likely acutely aware of the importance of helping protect your lung health. As you return to doing the things you love, it's essential to understand the risk for pneumococcal pneumonia, a potentially serious lung infection that can strike anyone at any time.

Older adults are at greater risk of serious illness and death resulting from pneumococcal pneumonia compared to younger adults, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To give you the facts you need to help protect yourself, the American Lung Association is partnering with Pfizer to raise awareness about the risk of pneumococcal pneumonia for adults 65 and older.

An Overview

When words begin with "pneumo" it means related to the lungs, and a pneumonia is an infection in one or both lungs, which you can get from bacteria, viruses or fungi. This infection causes the air sacs in your lungs to fill with fluid or pus, which makes the gas exchange that supplies your body with oxygen more difficult. It also can result in a host of uncomfortable and potentially serious symptoms.

Pneumococcal pneumonia, the most common type of bacterial pneumonia, is caused by bacteria that can be spread through coughing and close contact with an infected person. Common symptoms include high fever, excessive sweating, shaking chills, coughing, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath and chest pain. Certain symptoms, such as cough and fatigue, can appear quickly and without warning and severe cases can lead to hospitalization and even be potentially life threatening.

Risk Factors and Protection

The immune system naturally weakens with age, making age a risk factor regardless of health status.

"Even healthy adults aged 65 and older are over 10 times more likely to be hospitalized with pneumococcal pneumonia than those aged 18-49," says Albert Rizzo, MD, chief medical officer, American Lung Association. "If you also live with a chronic lung disease like COPD, asthma, diabetes or chronic heart disease, you face a greater



risk."

Dr. Rizzo speaks on behalf of the American Lung Association when he encourages all adults 65 and older to speak with their doctor about vaccination. But he knows all too well that there are disparities among who is most likely to be protected against this potentially serious lung infection. While the overall vaccination rate among adults 65 and older was 59% in 2017, only 42% of Latino/Hispanic individuals were vaccinated. And with only 45% percent of Black adults and 56% of Asian adults vaccinated, the gap in coverage has potentially serious consequences for communities of color.

Additionally, Latino and Black

Americans are at greater risk of developing chronic health conditions such as asthma and diabetes compared to white Americans, which further increases their risk of getting pneumococcal pneumonia.

If you are 65 or older, talk to your healthcare provider about pneumococcal pneumonia vaccination, which is available at many doctor's offices and local pharmacies. You can also learn more at Lung.org/pneumococcal, where you can take a free personal risk assessment quiz.

Don't ignore pneumococcal pneumonia. Get the facts you need to help protect yourself.

-StatePoint



Why you need dental insurance in retirement.

Medicare doesn't pay for dental care.¹

As good as Medicare is, it was never meant to cover everything. If you want protection, you need to purchase individual insurance.

Early detection can prevent small problems from becoming expensive ones.

The best way to avoid large dental bills is preventive care. Experts recommend checkups twice a year.

Previous dental work can wear out.

Your odds of having a dental problem only go up as you age.²

Treatment is expensive — especially the services people over 50 often need.

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- ▶ Shop for coverage with no annual maximum on cash benefits.

Simply put – without dental insurance, there may be an important gap in your healthcare coverage.

¹ "Medicare & You," Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2021. ² "How might my oral and dental health change as I age?," www.usnews.com, 11/30/2018. ³ American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute, 2018 Survey of Dental Fees, Copyright 2018, American Dental Association.

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sports

Nick Foles seeks God's plan for life after football



Nick Foles said he thinks about life after football "all the time." Whatever he does next, he wants it to have purpose.

"I don't want to end my career and not know what direction I'm going, so I think about it all the time," Foles said recently on Sports Spectrum's "Weekly Slant." "What will I do next? Whenever I'm done, I'll still be a young man. I just turned 33. I have one more year on my contract. I'll play out this year and we'll see what happens after that."

Foles, who most notably helped lead the Philadelphia Eagles to a win in Super Bowl LII and won Most Valuable Player honors, just finished his 10th season in the NFL and his second with the Chicago Bears.

He's been used as a starting quarterback sporadically with five different teams, including a stretch of seven games with the Bears in 2020, but has predominantly served as a backup throughout his career. He was called on to start in Philadelphia when MVP candidate Carson Wentz went down with an injury and subsequently led the Eagles to the Super Bowl championship.

In 2019 he signed a four-year, \$88 million contract with the Jacksonville Jaguars, \$50.1 million of which was guaranteed. He was named the starting quarterback for the first game of the season but suffered an injury that sidelined him until Week 11. He started three more games before being benched in Week 13 in favor of Gardner Minshew. The Jaguars traded Foles to Chicago in March 2020, and he was set to be the backup for starter Mitchell Trubisky.

But in 2021, he was Chicago's third-string quarterback for most of the season after the team signed Andy Dalton in the off-season and drafted Justin Fields. However, with Dalton and Fields both out in Week 16 for a game against the Seattle Seahawks, Foles led Chicago to a come-from-behind 25-24 win in his only start of the season.

He praised God during his postgame press conference.

"I said it a couple years ago in a press conference ... it doesn't matter if you're the first-string,

second-string, third-string, you've got to know who you are as a human being and what your identity is," Foles said. "It can't be in this game. It's got to be in something greater, and I've always said mine's in Jesus Christ. I was a third-string quarterback tonight. I was just a third-string — that's my label. But at the end of the day, that's not who I am. I'm just Nick Foles. I just go out there and I play. I lean on my teammates. I go to work."

After the 2022 season, he'll enter the free-agent market as a 34-year-old. There's no guarantee he'll have a job somewhere. All of that has led him to consider what's next.

He's completing seminary through Redemption Seminary, a go-at-your-own-pace program that he said fits perfectly for his life as a professional athlete. He has a heart for people in the young adult phase of life, so serving in young adult ministry is one potential option for him.

"The high school, college level — young men and young women — are very vulnerable in the sense of trying to figure out who they are as human beings, and who created them, what's going on, what is life," Foles said on the

FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

By Rob Mooney

It's that time of the year when we start preparing for the NCAA Basketball Tournament. Selection Sunday is March 13th but there's always a lot of speculation leading up to the moment where the teams and seedings for the tournament are announced. Let's take a look at the Big 12 and where they stand heading into March Madness!

The Big 12 is quite arguably the best conference in college basketball from top to bottom. With that being said, what teams can we expect to see dancing this year?

Let's start with a couple of obvious teams. The Kansas Jayhawks are currently being projected as a #1 seed. KU currently holds a 2 game lead in the conference race over the Baylor Bears and the Texas Tech Red Raiders. The 'Hawks played Baylor on February 26th, and even if they lost, that would put them a game over Baylor. A win in Waco would end the Bears conference championship hopes.

Baylor, the defending national champions, are projecting out as #2



seed. Baylor is currently 23-5 and 11-4 in the conference. Texas Tech, who is possibly playing the best in the conference right now, is projected as a #3 seed. Currently 22-6 and 11-4 in the conference, they only have 3 games left so they'll need a lot of help to claim the Big 12 championship.

The Texas Longhorns are projecting to be a #5 seed. Of their 8 losses, 6 of them are to ranked teams. Is it just me, or do the Longhorns never seem to play up to their potential? Maybe this year will be different considering that Chris Beard is their coach now. It will be interesting to see how far they advance.

Iowa State is quite possibly the best story of the Big 12 this year. Currently at 18-9, the Cyclones are projected as a #9 seed. Not too bad for a team that went 2-22 last year, including 0-18 in the Big 12. A plethora of transfers and a new coach has the Cyclones on the verge of a tournament invitation. Incredible.

The last Big 12 team to make it into the tournament is TCU. After finishing 12-14 a year ago, the Horned Frogs have righted the ship are currently 17-8. However, 4 of their last 5 games are against Texas, Texas Tech and two games against KU. They could easily be 17-12 after that stretch. However, if they are able to get 1 or 2 wins, they will cement their case for the tournament.

Kansas State, Oklahoma and West Virginia are all possibly in line to play in the NIT tournament. Even though they're in the bottom of the Big 12, all of them are at .500 or better. The only team that won't be playing this postseason is Oklahoma State and that's because they're ineligible for the postseason this year due to infraction penalties.

This should be an amazing tournament and hopefully the Big 12 will be well represented in the Sweet 16 and beyond!

"Weekly Slant." "Sometimes we feel like we have it figured out, but some adversity hits us and we realize we don't. But that is definitely something that's always been on my heart."

Another potential option is coaching, but purely on a volunteer basis at a local high school — something that would still allow him to use his gifts and pour into young adults.

"I love the aspect of coaching," he said. "I love helping young players out, teaching them the game, teaching them about life. Football's a

sport where not only can you teach them the X's and O's and the fundamentals of it, but you can teach them life while teaching them that."

He'll remain committed to the Bears next season, all the while trying to discern God's plan for his next steps.

"All that's on my heart," Foles said.

"I'm sure God will probably bring up something at the right time that I didn't even see before and He'll be like, 'All right, this is the path I want you to go on,' because that's usually how it works. My plan won't be His, but just keeping an open heart to all of it."

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Five Interior Design Trends to Use in Your Home in 2022

After learning to live life more remotely in 2020 and 2021, it's time to view 2022 as a fresh start.

To help you adopt a new, balanced way of living, FrogTape brand painter's tape and celebrity interior designer, Taniya Nayak, are sharing five home interior design trends meant to inspire spaces that will welcome guests, while still incorporating the special intimacies that may have been rediscovered from slowing down. Each trend can be utilized for a full home makeover or incorporated into little touches to freshen up a space.



1. Embrace. Embrace everything that is good in your life and create a sense of comfort, warmth and security. Nayak recommends cozy textures and a palette of mellow coral, subtle orange, soft green and creamy shades of white and brown to achieve this look in spaces like bedrooms or family rooms. A simple and stylish way to incorporate this into a room is to add a coat of paint to a textured basket for a pop

of color. Then, fill it with plenty of plush blankets to complete the cozy look and feel.

2. Rise. Give a fresh perspective to your existing space with the 'Rise' trend. Inspired by the morning light peeking through the shades, incorporating this trend into your bedroom or bathroom is bound to invigorate and motivate you. For example, add a coat of green paint to your closet door for a nice pop of color to an area

where you start your day.

No matter where you're looking to add fresh color, you'll want to achieve clean, sharp paint lines. One of Nayak's go-to tools is a premium painter's tape that produces professional-looking results, like FrogTape brand painter's tape, which is treated with patented PaintBlock Technology, to deliver the sharpest lines possible.

3. Gather. Gathering with friends and family has been long awaited, so set the mood and ambience just the way you imagined it. Inspired by the depth of conversations with loved ones, the 'Gather' trend embraces rich, dark tones like navy, teal or forest green. Incorporate this trend by painting the focal point of a room, like kitchen cabinets or the living room fireplace. Or, add bold, dark details with furniture and artwork. You can keep it subtle by creating custom centerpieces dipped in paint and wrapped in twine.

4. Revive. Revive your home with soothing and vibrant shades of pink, orange and blue to create a balance of motivated yet satisfied. Consider adding a vibrant paint color to old, worn-down details like a front door, nightstand or kitchen table. It might feel out of context, or out of character, but give it a try.

"This trend can be described as carefree, festive and fun," said Nayak. "Whatever it is that makes you happy...go for it!"


5. Shine. The 'Shine' trend is all about letting your true self shine. Implement this trend in any room throughout your home by embracing every color of the rainbow and visually displaying what's in your heart. Using FrogTape, tape off a custom

pattern that is uniquely yours and paint it whatever color you choose.

Creative and easy to achieve, these rising trends for 2022 provide inspiration to refresh your home's interior.

Visit FrogTape.com/Trends for more trend information and ideas.

—StatePoint



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Missouri and Kansas residents warned about risk to pets from coyotes

Both Missouri and Kansas natural resource officials are warning the public about coyotes.

The Missouri Department of Conservation says the residents should keep in mind that we're now in what are four very active months for coyote activity. That's true for both Missouri and Kansas. Breeding season begins in February, with mothers giving

birth within two months. That means the animals will be searching for food.

The coyote ranges throughout Kansas from woodlots in the east around the state's major metropolitan areas, through the grasslands of the Flinthills, to the intensively-managed agricultural landscape in the west. In the Sunflower state, Coyote hunting

has been practiced for more than a century, but the state's coyote population has more than tripled since the 1980s.

"Unlike many other kinds of wildlife, coyotes adapt particularly well around human development and coexist with people in many places. These areas can include municipal parks and other urban green spaces, golf courses, cemeteries, suburban wooded common areas, and even within subdivisions themselves," the department said in an advisory this week.

The department says that's why coyotes can end up running into pets, which they attack not because of a need for food, but for the competition for it.

As Kansas City's regional population edges towards two million residents, there are still hundreds of encounters each year.

What can you do to minimize the risk to your home and pets?

Food sources: Don't leave pet food outside. Cover your trash cans, and wait as long as you can before putting trash and recycling out for pick up.

Fear: Use whatever scare tactics work for you if you see coyotes approaching. Yell. Spray a hose. Use an air horn. Some people have been known to bang pots and pans.

Vigilance: Don't leave pets outside alone.

Kansas officials say your efforts will be futile if neighbors are not also following these guidelines. If you are experiencing problems with coyotes, or have any questions regarding them, contact your nearest Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks agent.



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