

SPRING 2019

DESTINY

M A G A Z I N E

GLOBAL & DESTINY CONSOLIDATE

Q&A INTERVIEW WITH BOTH DIRECTORS

**2019 GATHERING
REGISTRATION OPEN**



DESTINY LEADERS

Welcome To Your Future

Welcome to Destiny's Covenant Family of Friends and a World of opportunities for you to GROW, SERVE, and SOW in the Kingdom of God. At Destiny you can build lifelong relationships, be challenged to achieve your greatest potential, see the world, serve someone in need and become all that God has called you to become. Experience all of these exciting opportunities among a family where you are loved, accepted and celebrated!

A Place To Grow...

As a Minister of the Gospel you need a safe place to be challenged, equipped and encouraged to reach your greatest potential. At Destiny we are absolutely committed to meeting those needs. Through Destiny Membership you will find growth opportunities such as: one-on-one coaching, exciting events & conferences, roundtables, internet webinars, strategic relationships, educational travel and mission outreaches. Each designed to grow you into the leader God wants you to be.

A Place To Serve...

The Kingdom of God is about service to God and to others. At Destiny you will find many opportunities to serve by assisting other Christian Leaders to achieve their goals and dreams. We do this together as we plant new churches, develop interns, train leaders, participate in special projects and various short term missions efforts.

A Place To Sow...

Destiny's Covenant Family is filled with generous people. We are a giving/sowing culture. We believe strongly in the principle of tithing and that it should be practiced at every level in the Kingdom. We believe that both individuals and organizations are included in God's concept of sowing and reaping, and that as we submit to God's plan, both are abundantly blessed. As individuals we sow in obedience, and as organizations we teach giving and lead by example.

www.destinyleaders.com

A WORD FROM PHIL & CATHY



Welcome to the Spring Edition of Destiny Magazine! We're so glad you're here! Wow, what an amazing season we are experiencing! Flowers, showers and all that goes with it remind us that new life, growth, and fresh opportunities are on the horizon. And with Destiny, it's more than just the weather or the seasonable thing to say. It's Spring at Destiny as well! We are in one of the most exciting moments in our nearly twenty-year history! Destiny's Covenant Family of Friends is growing. With the consolidation of Global Network of Christian Ministries into Destiny, we have the rare opportunity to welcome hundreds of new friends to our family! If you are a part of Global and this is the first Destiny Magazine you have received, let us be the first to welcome you and express our deep desire to serve you and help to make your life in Christ's service better and more productive! You are wanted and welcomed! Make yourselves at home, look around, check us out, we are yours, we are one! We want to be your network! I know without a doubt that working together, building on the great legacy of Global and the wonderful men and women who have blazed a spiritual trail before us, we can imagine and realize a future filled with purpose, opportunity, and reach a world desperate for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Destiny Family, the twentieth Gathering is just around the corner. Make sure you attend and meet someone new, welcome them, love them, share contact information with them, and let them know they are loved! We will see you all in West Monroe, LA at Christ Church for the Gathering! Enjoy the **Magazine!**

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THE RESURRECTION OF A VISION

DR. PHILLIP BRASSFIELD

An excerpt from Dr. Phillip Brassfield's book, *Pilgrimage to Pentecost*.

Mark 16:9 *"Now when He arose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons."*

Jesus' idea of destiny is so different from ours most of the time. And that is a good thing. I must say, if I were Jesus Christ and had just experienced what he experienced during his torture and death on the cross, I would have done the resurrection a little differently. I mean, if I had been betrayed by a friend, abandoned

by the rest, spit upon, cursed, lied about, severely beaten, and crucified, when I came out of the grave I would have made a few more unscheduled visits than he did, if you know what I mean. And they would have been to a select group of people who had a celestial visit coming. I probably would have made another midnight visit to the palace of Caiaphas, saying, "Guess who?", or maybe appeared to the Sanhedrin in the Hall of Hewn Stones, or perhaps shown up in Pilate's courtroom, saying, "I'm back." But not Jesus. No, he understood destiny and had no identity crisis, no need to get even. He was clear about his purpose for coming into the world. It was for those very people who did what they did to him that he came to die.

KING OF MISFITS

So instead of making a grand appearance at some strategic location in an “I’ll-get-you-back” kind of visit, Jesus makes his first appearance to a woman, previously demonized, in an obscure garden outside the busy commerce center of Jerusalem (John 20, the appearance to Mary Magdalene). She had been delivered by Jesus only in the last couple of years, and now he grants her the grand privilege of becoming the first evangelist of the New Covenant. Jesus sent her to tell the apostles, who were currently hiding for their lives (those great men of faith and power), about the resurrection. By doing so he offers hope to all of us who have fallen, been bound, and humiliated by sin. Yes, the very first appearance of the resurrected Christ was to a woman with a past, a woman whose life had been transformed, who had become a woman of light because of the victory he had won.

For Mary, coming to the tomb that early on the third day had more to do with loyalty than with faith. Reading the text of the Gospels, it is quite clear that her visit was all about love for the Lord and a personal commitment that she felt toward him. She was no quitter. And she had not forgotten what Jesus had done for her. Besides, she was a misfit and an outcast from society. She was not concerned about the opinions of men and had long since lost the fear of social rejection or of losing her life. She had proven that when she stood at the foot of the cross, by staying when almost everyone else had abandoned him. No, she was not afraid; she was devastated! All she could think about was what life was like before he came. For her, prior to Jesus’ coming, life had been a living hell. She had fallen so far into the pit of rejection and despair that her spiritual freedom and free will had been surrendered to the devil, and with it her morals and decency. In Jesus she had found freedom and peace where, in others, she had only found judgment and condemnation. When he looked at her, all he could see through the eyes of love was a confused, abused daughter that had become a slave to sin. She was the epitome of what he had come to do. So with the gentleness of a loving father, he had freed her and restored her without judgment or condemnation.

HOPE LIVES

Jesus’ appearance to Mary in the garden that resurrection morning must have been a vote of confidence and affirmation for her, to say the least. For one who had been so devastated, humiliated, even captivated by hell and sin, it really underscored

the point and power of the resurrection. What a fitting way to introduce this new kingdom initiative, and to declare to the principalities and powers of this earth that death, hell and the grave had been defeated. To choose one who once was a slave to the flesh and to the devil was a powerful sign of victory, and an appropriate message announcing the intentions of Christ’s kingdom and what was to come for the kingdom of darkness. Now with the cross behind and the resurrection having been accomplished, the ground rules had been completely redefined. No longer would death rule the hearts of mankind through fear, for it had been defeated. No longer would the dreams and destinies of people be dashed by the grim reality of sin and despair. No, with the victory of the resurrection came the hope of success and personal fulfillment in life and eternity. Death was no longer the master and we its fearful subjects, but rather we were freed to become what God has purposed us to become. We were loosed from the power of the flesh to rule over us and limit our potential through a paradigm of fear. The door into the favor of God, the way of access into the presence of the Lord that Adam and Eve had enjoyed before sin slammed it shut, had been reopened by Christ on the cross. And now we, as soldiers of the cross, without the condemnation of sin, could attack the kingdom of the god of this world with faith as our focus instead of fear, joy as our anthem, and love and acceptance as our banner.

There are moments when our dreams seem to go up in a puff of smoke, when our hopes are mortally wounded by the vicious mobs of the disappointed. When this happens, give it a little while. Let it rest maybe three days or so, then go back to where you laid your dreams and let the Resurrection and the Life restore, commission, and renew your vision. He will give you a vision that even death itself cannot take away.

IMPACT POINTS

1. **Jesus understood destiny and his mission and purpose.** Coming to grips with who you are and what God has called you to do is the surest formula for achieving your destiny. Be completely at peace with what God has called you to do and the destiny he has planned for you. Luke 24: 25, 26: “Oh foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”

continue on next page

2. **At the resurrection, Jesus made new life and a fresh start available to all who have been devastated by sin.** This point is made clear by his appearing first to Mary following his resurrection. She had been so victimized and bound by the devil and enslaved in her present by the shackles of her past. Being the first to see Jesus after his death was no doubt a vote of confidence for her and one that resonates with all of us who have been a puppet in sin's grip. No matter where you have been, what you have done, or what has been done to you, don't be afraid to dream again. A living Jesus has given you the opportunity to pursue your destiny. John 20: 31: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

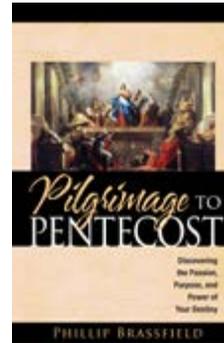
3. **Death need no longer control us through fear.** Fear is one of the most powerful threats to your destiny. Failure, defeat, humiliation, and the like are all by-products of the fear of death. But through the power of the resurrection, we can now dream and achieve without the constant fear of failure. 1 John 4: 18: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."

Question for Self-Reflection

The fear of death and failure can hold us all out of our purpose if we allow it. Take a moment and list several common fears that war against your potential. Now take them to God in prayer.

Coaching for Success

Faith is the key to overcoming fear. Fear and faith cannot work together. One will ultimately gain control of your life and consequently your future. Fear must be confronted, challenged, and overcome. Both fear and faith operate in a similar manner— the expectation of an anticipated end. Therefore, study the promises of God to his children and learn to speak your agreement with those promises over your life situations. Focus on his word, not your circumstances, and trust God for what is best concerning you.



*To request your copy of
Pilgrimage to Pentecost,
please call the Destiny
Office at 501.887.9933.
Books are \$9.99.*

JOIN DESTINY IN ISRAEL

NOVEMBER 6-13, 2019



DESTINY
LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE



NOW ENROLLING FALL 2019!

DLI in July

We need your help to make 2019 DLI's best year yet, and we would appreciate your partnership during our upcoming DLI in July promotional period. **We are asking you to take one Sunday in July** and let your church know about this incredible opportunity to build leaders who study God's Word, serve the church, and share their gifts with the world. **Download and show the new DLI video** that will be debuted at this year's conference. A link will be provided at a later date. **Direct Potential Students to the DLI Website:** destinyleadershipinstitute.com.

Students that register for DLI and set up a payment plan between now and the end of July will receive their first semester of books free!

DLI ANNOUNCES ARTICULATION AGREEMENT WITH SEU

We are excited to announce that DLI has recently signed an articulation agreement with Southeastern University in Lakeland, FL. SEU is "committed to providing a Christian college education designed to equip the next generation to go into the world as influential servant leaders in their careers and their communities." This perfectly corresponds with DLI's vision for education and leadership training.

Our agreement allows graduates to transfer specified course credits from DLI into Southeastern towards either an Associates of Ministerial Leadership or Bachelors of Science in Ministerial Leadership

Southeastern University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate, baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Southeastern University."



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destinyleadershipinstitute.com

NEW STUDENTS BEGIN
SEPTEMBER 2ND⁷



A SINGULAR VISION

"You have one business on earth - to save souls." ~ John Wesley

PASTOR MIKE ACOSTA

It was near Itigi, in central Tanzania, that I encountered a young pastor with a distinctive scar which traversed its way from his hairline through the pit of where his right eye had been. When I asked him about it, he shared with me a story which profoundly impacted my view on Christian leadership, church missions and the purpose of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

His story began with the phrase "When I became a man, I wanted to see how big the world was..." As a young man in his tribe, never having attended any form of formalized schooling, the "world" was as far as he could see or as distant as he had ever traveled. He set out on a journey to find out just how big the world really was. Several weeks into his walkabout, he found a man - Bishop Williams Yindi, Founder of Unreached People's Mission (UPM). Bishop Yindi shared the gospel with the young man and invited him to his home and

ministry school. The young man stayed with UPM for one year. At the conclusion of his time there, he knew the gospel needed to get back to his village.

He proceeded to retrace his path back to his community and upon arrival, he immediately visited the witch doctor's hut. When he shared the "good news" of Jesus with the shaman, the witch doctor swiftly grabbed a spear and jabbed it into his right eye. When he slumped to the ground, the witch doctor proclaimed, "his body is not worthy to be burned nor buried, take him and feed him to the animals." The young man's family was then left with the responsibility of carrying his lifeless body to an area where lions were known to feed. They left him to be consumed.

Sometime later, he miraculously awakened, got up, dusted himself off and returned to the witch doctor's hut and proclaimed, "You have killed me, but my God has raised me again!"

This young pastor looked at me with his one eye, with a depth of conviction I've rarely witnessed, and stated "And now, Praise God, there are 34 people in my village who are saved and going to heaven and it only cost me one eye!"

"We talk of the Second Coming; half the world has never heard of the first." ~ Oswald J. Smith

It was in this moment that my faith was shaken to the core. The "good news" to this young pastor meant something entirely different than it did for me. He was willing, and he was grateful. He placed a value on 34 souls that was greater than half his vision. His desperation and urgency for the salvation of his people created a boldness that belied his youth and ushered in a miracle of healing that was of Biblical proportions.

Shortly after returning home from this trip, I was invited to a discussion which bantered about the semantics of faith. Much of the discussion was focused on the innovative ways that churches can disciple the church, which is a vital subject matter, however, it lacked the passion and fervency of hearing from the frontlines of faith. I thank God for those on the frontlines of faith, where Christianity is argued for, stood for, sacrificed for and is riding on the backs of modern-day heroes of the faith. Still, these saints need the innovative models and plans of discipleship many American churches have developed to accompany their already developed zeal for soul winning.

Currently on earth there are approximately 2+ billion Christians and 5+ billion people which are not. There is a field ripe for the harvest, and there are those whose call is to labor among the 5 billion, to present a timeless gospel, in culturally relevant ways, and to serve as the vanguard of our faith.

"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't." ~ John Piper

This is how your church can participate in missions: **Pray, Give & Go.**

Missionaries on the frontlines of faith need your prayers! In my experience, the greatest missionaries value your prayer over your dollar. There are missionaries everywhere: In your Community - get to know them and pray for them. In your Region and Nation - develop relationships and pray for them. Globally - develop partnerships and pray for them.

Your financial gifts make it possible for missionaries to create new locales daily, from where the aroma of worship is filling heaven. The giving of financial resources, containers of supplies, teaching materials and more, equip, empower and release these men and



women of God to win for the Kingdom of God.

Go! Go to your community, get out of the church and go. Go regionally and participate. Go globally, work alongside world-changers for a week and allow your heart to be challenged and renewed with passion for the Great Commission of Christ. Bring your anointing and systems of ministry to help the Church in developing areas disciple new believers most effectively.

"If you take missions out of the Bible, you won't have anything left but the covers." ~Nina Gunter

The Bible is much more than a self-help manual or history book. It is God's plan for humanity; it is the expressed love of Jesus for mankind. It is the irrevocable truth for eternal salvation. It is to be shared externally by people whose lives have been changed internally. Today it is being smuggled over mountain passes into closed countries, being written on prison walls by persecuted Christians, and shared in cramped, hushed house churches around the world. My challenge to you is to take some time this week and evaluate your efforts to deploy the greatest piece of information any human will ever hear to your community, our nation and around the world.

****For more information about ImagineNations and how you can get involved, please visit the website imagineations.world**

As the Executive Director of ImagineNations, Pastor Mike Acosta works to equip and empower Christian leaders globally and develop the next generation of faith through education and engagement. Serving as the Executive Pastor of Ministries for Grace Church in Northeast Houston, Pastor Mike oversees the ministries of all campuses.



GLOBAL + DESTINY

LET'S DO SOMETHING
GREAT TOGETHER!

AN INTERVIEW WITH GLOBAL CHAIRMAN PASTOR MARK BRIGGS AND DESTINY DIRECTOR DR. PHILLIP BRASSFIELD

The Spring of 2019 will definitely go down in history as a landmark season and a watershed moment for Global Network of Christian Ministries (GNCM) and the Destiny Church and Ministers Network! The respective groups announced early this year that an agreement had been reached for Global Network of Christian Ministries, an organization that credentials ministers with members around the world and over thirty-nine states, to consolidate into Destiny Ministries, an organization with 20 years of history serving ministers and churches.

Recently, Global Chairman, Pastor Mark Briggs and Destiny's Director, Dr. Phillip Brassfield sat down for an interview regarding details about the consolidation.

PASTOR MARK, HOW DID THIS OPPORTUNITY COME ABOUT?

"It's always been the desire of GNCM to provide as many opportunities as possible for its members. But year-by-year, through each subsequent administration, this desire has been frustrated by the fact that GNCM does not have the full time staff or the funding system to help to make this dream become a reality. In the Fall of 2018 I felt led of the Lord to approach Phil Brassfield and discuss the possibility of a consolidation of Global with Destiny. Dr. Brassfield asked to pray about the idea, and after careful thought and prayer returned and without reservation agreed that God was in the move."

DR. BRASSFIELD, WHAT WAS YOUR RESPONSE?

"First I was taken back by the thought. This had actually been proposed 15 years ago by Paul Russell who was then the serving Chairman of Global at that time. And, it just wasn't the right time. But after many hours of prayer, consultation and careful thought, I came to the conclusion that the time was now and the moment was right. I really felt like we could help and that it would benefit the Kingdom and fit the purposes of God!"

PASTOR MARK, WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

"Well I asked Dr. Brassfield to meet with the Global Board at our annual meeting, this year in San Antonio in February. And after in depth discussion looking at the pros and cons and trying to consider all ramifications, the Board of Global voted to proceed with the proposal."

DR. BRASSFIELD, WHEN DID YOU PRESENT THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THE DESTINY BOARD?

"It was after the Global Board meeting. It worked out well. Our annual Board meeting was coincidentally scheduled just a few weeks after the meeting with Global in San Antonio. When our Board heard the proposal, it was received with great excitement. After a detailed discussion among the Destiny Board, the decision was made to move forward after a thorough legal review by our Attorneys at Story Law Firm to make sure the consolidation was done right and that the interest of all parties was considered."

PASTOR MARK BRIGGS SAID, *"Yes, in fact we did the same thing. And following a legal review by both organizations, the path was cleared and the respective Boards approved the proposal and subsequent plans*



for consolidation. And here we are today on the brink of a new season for a new combined network of Christian Leaders with a Kingdom assignment! Global Network is consolidating into Destiny Ministries!"

"We believe that working together as Destiny, we can better serve the needs of ministers, churches and Christian Leaders who desperately need fellowship, pastoral care and ministry support. By coming together, Global brings an expanded footprint to Destiny with a presence in numerous foreign countries and members in over 39 states. Destiny, on the other hand, already has the full time staff and support systems in place and for over almost 20 years has been a globally recognized leader in the area of ministers, ministry and church development."

DR. BRASSFIELD CHIMED IN, *"In June, Destiny will host its 20th Conference that has grown in attendance with each passing year. We offer a wide range of opportunities and programs designed to help ministers and churches maximize their potential, like coaching, educational programs, missions opportunities and trips, along with educational and fellowship travel events. We have group exempt status with the IRS so that churches that wish to do so can operate under Destiny's group exemption. Moreover, Global and Destiny have consistently worked very closely over the last nearly twenty years. In fact, at one point I have served on the Global Board and Council of Elders for over ten years and have deep existing relationships inside of the Global Network."*

PASTOR MARK, *"This just makes sense. We do not have to reinvent the wheel. We are from the same tribe, run in the same lane, we should be on the same team."*

DR. BRASSFIELD, *"I couldn't agree more! We are so very excited about the future!"*



PASTOR JONATHAN SUBER

ISAIAH 58 FAST



One of the most exciting and rewarding seasons while pastoring in Louisiana several years ago was partnering with our Destiny family during our 1st corporate Isaiah 58 Fast! Dr. Brassfield challenged us with a very practical scriptural promise that we could unite around to tangibly do something great together.

This was an incredible opportunity to join with our Destiny family and friends for a focused season of repentance, serving and intentional missional outreach. We sowed corporately into local and international needs at the Gathering as well as encourage one another to serve local communities as one big strategic serve team. The testimonies from around the nation and world from that joint effort are now motivating us once again to pursue the Isaiah 58 Promise as a covenant family.

God reminds us of the fast He had chosen in Verse 6 to the prophet Isaiah;

"Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out? When you see the naked, that you cover him, and hide not yourself from your own flesh?"

Dr Brassfield reminded us that in the Isaiah 58 Promise, Jehovah made some amazing promises that we can accept as facts:

1. **HE WILL DEFEND** us from attack from the unexpected. Verse 8: "The Glory of God shall be your rear guard."
2. **HE WILL GIVE** us an irresistible light, quick healing and His attention when we call. Verses 8-9
3. **HE WILL SUSTAIN** us in recession (drought), strengthen our bodies, and cause us to flourish like a well watered garden, and a spring whose waters do not fail. Verse 11 He will give us off-spring for generations who will build well. Restore and continue His work! Verse 12

We are so excited to pursue these promises again this year as a corporate body with ministry partners around the nation, and literally around the world, this Summer. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. We have the opportunity to seek and to serve the lost where they can be exposed and introduced to the living Jesus by our love!

In the book Serve Your City, Pastor Dino Rizzo writes:

"Jesus doesn't ask us to care out of empty hearts. If we see needy people as threats to our comfort, as irritations or annoyances, we need to experience the Grace of God more deeply. Graced people grace people. Healed people heal people. Forgiven people forgive people. Loved people love people. Accepted people accept people."

Wow, what an amazing opportunity to be a part of such a network of ministry affiliates where we can focus our giving and serving then be the hands and feet of Jesus. I love what Pastor Chris Hodges says. *"Don't reinvent the wheel. Look around at where God's hand is already moving and go be a part of it or support it."*

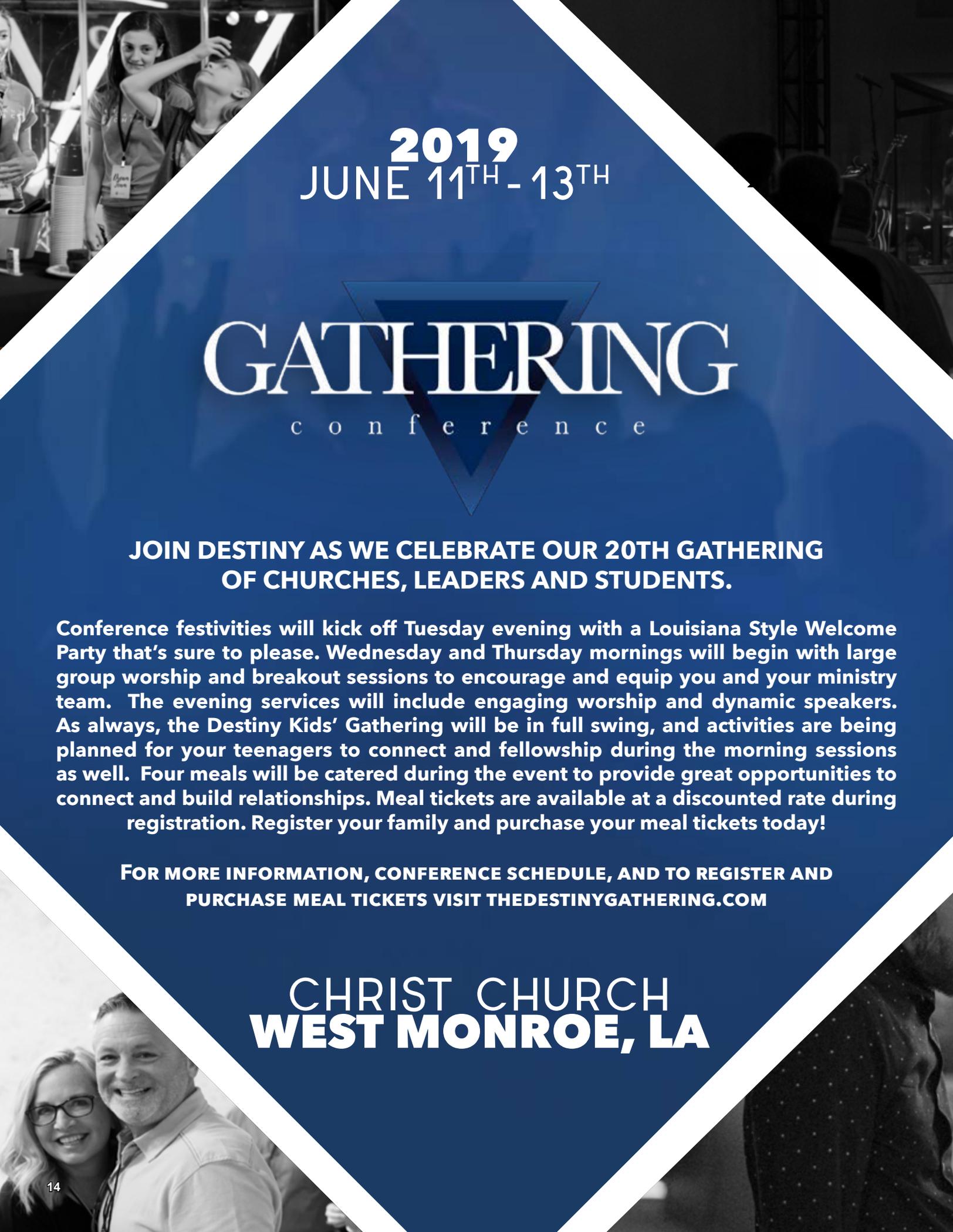
We will be presenting International and Local opportunities to both serve and support at The Gathering 19. There will be projects of all sizes to be a part of as well as training and strategy to take home for local churches and partners to serve together as one big "C" Church!

As a covenant family we will be setting aside **June 23rd - July 13th** as a serve and sharing fast unto our Lord. We will be partnering as well with ARC Churches around the world **Saturday, July 13th** to serve our city and communities on Serve Day 19.

I can't wait to see what this is going to activate in the Heavens for our local assemblies. This is our opportunity...

LET'S DO SOMETHING GREAT TOGETHER THIS SUMMER!

Beginning his own itinerant ministry at the age of 14, Jonathan has preached in 47 of the United States, all the provinces of Canada and has done missions work in Central and South America, Europe, the Caribbean Islands, Asia, Africa, India and the West Indies. In 1987, Jonathan married the love of his life, Stephanie Dawn Denny and together they began the journey of a lifetime which has encompassed pastoring churches, pioneering missions endeavors, and evangelistic ministry. Jonathan's passion is to see the rediscovery and resurgence of the original Church of Jesus Christ to become a "true 21st century expression of a 1st century experience." Jonathan is Senior Pastor at Oasis Church in Round Rock, Texas.

A large blue triangle is centered on the page, containing the main text. The background of the entire page is a black and white photograph of people at a conference. In the top left, a woman is looking up at a screen. In the bottom left, a man and a woman are smiling. In the bottom right, a man is looking towards the camera.

2019
JUNE 11TH - 13TH

GATHERING

c o n f e r e n c e

**JOIN DESTINY AS WE CELEBRATE OUR 20TH GATHERING
OF CHURCHES, LEADERS AND STUDENTS.**

Conference festivities will kick off Tuesday evening with a Louisiana Style Welcome Party that's sure to please. Wednesday and Thursday mornings will begin with large group worship and breakout sessions to encourage and equip you and your ministry team. The evening services will include engaging worship and dynamic speakers. As always, the Destiny Kids' Gathering will be in full swing, and activities are being planned for your teenagers to connect and fellowship during the morning sessions as well. Four meals will be catered during the event to provide great opportunities to connect and build relationships. Meal tickets are available at a discounted rate during registration. Register your family and purchase your meal tickets today!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONFERENCE SCHEDULE, AND TO REGISTER AND
PURCHASE MEAL TICKETS VISIT THEDESTINYGATHERING.COM**

**CHRIST CHURCH
WEST MONROE, LA**



MEAL TICKET
SINGLE \$60
COUPLE \$120
FAMILY \$150

**BRING YOUR FAMILY
AND YOUR TEAM!**

ears to hear

RICARDO SANCHEZ

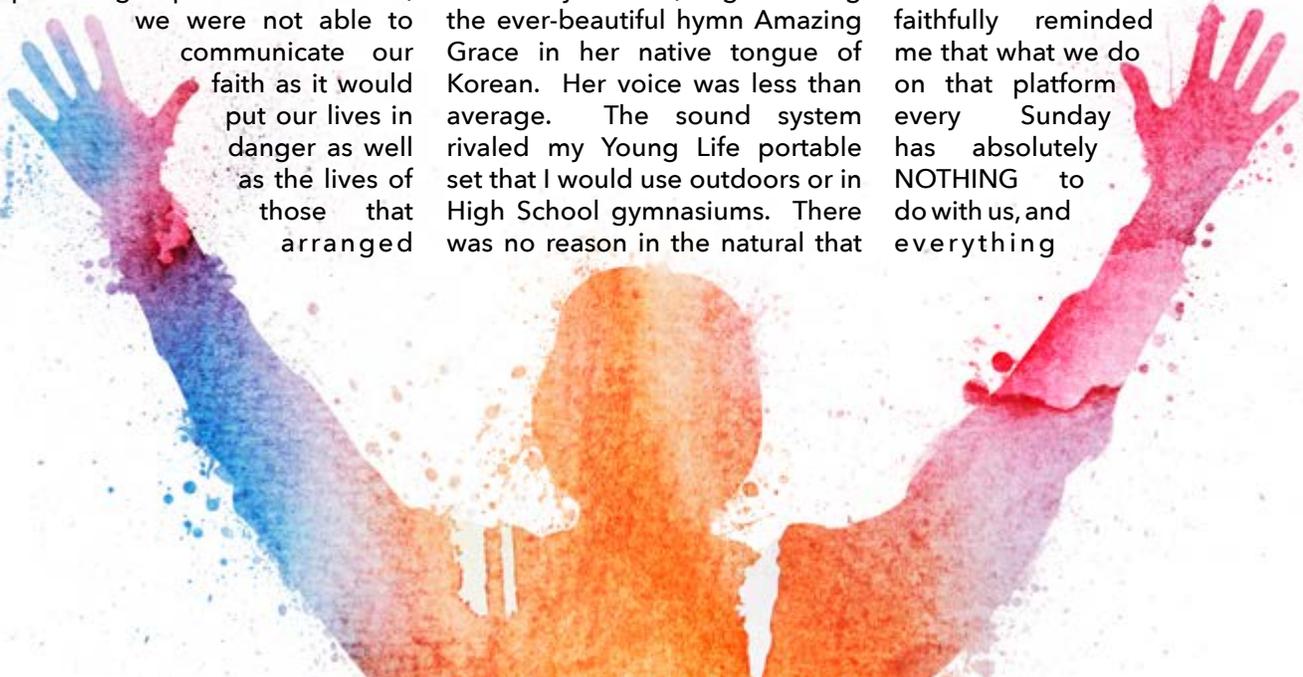
Some opportunities in life are unforgettable. Such was the case when I was afforded the opportunity in 1997 the privilege of joining a group of musicians from Nashville, Tennessee to participate in a world music festival hosted by Kim Jong-il in North Korea. As a young musician and not completely up to par on North Korean politics, I learned, AFTER arriving in North Korea that the United States was technically still at WAR with the communist country. We were living in a mutually agreed "cease fire", as the military termed it, following World War II. The North Korean government had invited a group of musicians from all over the world to come and compete in the music festival mentioned above in an effort to put North Korea on the map as a culturally competitive environment. Though all the musicians on the trip in my specific group were believers,

we were not able to communicate our faith as it would put our lives in danger as well as the lives of those that arranged

the opportunity for us. We were, however, allowed to sing gospel music as part of the competition. It was on this trip that I had an experience that changed the way I led worship and still affects me today, even 22+ years later. It was on this trip that I learned what it meant to have ears to hear.

It just so happened that the competition in North Korea had us in the country over Easter Sunday and we were scheduled to attend a government sanctioned church service (only government sanctioned services are allowed in North Korea) in the city of Pyongyang. I was in a foreign country, I didn't understand the language they spoke or how they communicated, but there was one thing I did understand. It was the part in the service for special music and a frail older lady, probably around the age of 50 or 60 years old, began to sing the ever-beautiful hymn Amazing Grace in her native tongue of Korean. Her voice was less than average. The sound system rivaled my Young Life portable set that I would use outdoors or in High School gymnasiums. There was no reason in the natural that

anything special would happen when this young woman took the microphone, however the presence of God that filled that small room was nothing but the undeniable anointing. It was healing. It softened hard hearts. It penetrated man-made walls. You didn't have to speak Korean to understand it, but everyone could feel it. Her worship had nothing to do with production and everything to do with our Savior. Sometimes in our American modern church we have become so attentive to the production, the lights, the programs, and the presentation of our worship that we forget God's presence and the power it brings. Don't get me wrong...I am all for the lights, and stage and presentation of church, but sometimes we need a good ol' fashioned reminder of why we do what we do. As a worship leader for nearly 30 years, I have walked in seasons where God has faithfully reminded me that what we do on that platform every Sunday has absolutely NOTHING to do with us, and everything



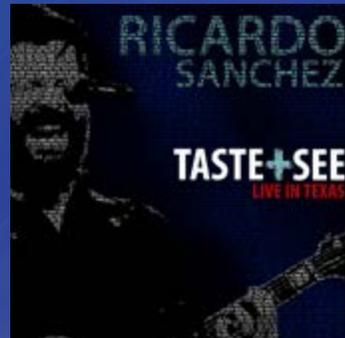
to do with God. I know it sounds like Worship 101, but I have learned that the longer you do ministry, the more often you need the reminder. Church can easily turn into business, and people can easily turn into a commodity, and worship easily can become a product. We must, worship leaders, stay out of the way and simply create an avenue for others to WORSHIP, with or without music, lights, and all the fanfare. Demonstrating a heart for God and having ears to hear begins long before the service starts. It begins in the daily disciplines of keeping God at the heart of all of it. It begins in the small mindsets of shutting down those thoughts that “puff” up our talent and ability and instead keep a confidently humble heart.

Though it is simple, I have made it a practice before every service to find a small quiet space by myself and kneel quietly for a few minutes with just me and God and set my focus on Him solely. I love what Isaiah 44:23 says, **“Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it; shout; break forth into singing. O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed...”** No matter where you are in your ministry or your walk with God, I pray that you have an ear to hear His voice amidst the chaos of life.



Grammy-nominated, Dove-Award, Tejano Music Award, and ASCAP Award winning, San Antonio based worship leader and Christian recording artist, Ricardo, is known nationally and internationally as a singer, notable song writer, conference speaker, and one of the nation's most preeminent worship leaders. Having authored or co-authored such songs as Moving Forward, I Call Your Name, Power of the Cross, Taste and See, and many others, Ricardo has received chart topping radio play, while his songs are sung in churches across the globe. Additionally, Ricardo's book, "It's Not Over" shares his personal testimony of God's miraculous grace in his family's life. Ricardo has led worship in the nation's largest churches and serves with the single mission to put songs in the hands of worship leaders. Ricardo and his wife, Jennette, have been married 20 years and have 3 teenage sons.

His newest creation, the aptly-titled Taste + See, is true to form; a range of flavors—Latin, Caribbean, pop, R&B, soul, and even rock influences—together comprising a bountiful praise & worship buffet. The 14 diverse tracks, all penned or co-penned by Ricardo, add to the singer's already robust discography which features anthems sung around the globe, like the GRAMMY®-nominated "Every Prayer" and Dove Award-winning "The Power of One," along with musical hallmarks "It's Not Over (When God Is In It)" and "Moving Forward," among many others. In addition to hundreds of concert and church appearances each year, Ricardo has served as a worship leader at Atlanta's Free Chapel and Pastor John Hagee's Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, as well as in his current role at multiple Faith Church campuses in Missouri and Florida. His heart also firmly resides in mentoring fellow worship leaders through his Windows 2 Worship seminars.



Find our more information about Ricardo and his music at ricardomusic.com.



FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS

PASTOR JOE HUNT

I'll never forget the moment I heard God whisper these words in my spirit, "Go home and plant a church". I was obviously familiar with where "home" was, but was oblivious to what it looked like to "plant a church", and those words caused excitement to fill my heart and vision to fill my mind. I saw it! A movement of zealous Northeast Ohioans, awakened to the power of the Holy Spirit! On fire, with the mission of God burning in their hearts, and a unified desire to make Christ famous all over the world.

At that moment, in my hotel room in Frisco, Texas, I caught a glimpse of the vision God had for what would become Compass North Church.

By faith, my wife and I and our three amazing children, packed up the life we had built for over 11 years in Long Beach, California and moved to Akron, Ohio. We spent several months on the ground in Ohio speaking vision over anyone and everyone God would lead us to, and invited them to come along for the ride. Just over 5 years ago,

we did it! Sharla and I, along with 42 other faith-filled believers, put a spiritual shovel in the ground of Akron, Ohio and “planted” the church God had placed in our hearts.

We celebrated 5 years, just a few months ago, by moving into our new 23,000 sq ft. worship facility with an auditorium that seats over 500 people. Over the past 5 years, we have seen 2,092 people give their lives to Christ, baptized 207 people, and we’ve given nearly \$200,000 to missions! God has been faithful! Yet, while I celebrate these statistics I am reminded that it has not always been a celebration. There have been ups and downs along the way. There have been many times that I have felt like giving up.

I am reminded of a story in 1 Samuel chapter 7, where Samuel is leading the Israelites to battle against the Philistines. They are gathered at a place called Mizpah. The Lord sends them from Mizpah, heading in the direction of a place called Shen, to encounter and defeat the Philistine army.

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, “Thus far the Lord has helped us.” 1 Samuel 7:12 NKJV

Mizpah in Hebrew means “watchtower”. A watchtower is an elevated place built for the purpose of seeing beyond obstacles. It offers a distant view. I’ll liken that to a place of vision. The place, a moment, in all of our lives where God elevates us and gives us a glimpse, or even a “peek”, of what He has in store for our future. Much like what I described earlier when God asked Sharla and I to “go home and plant a church”.

Shen in the Hebrew means “mountain top” or “peak”. This is the elevated place of fulfilled vision. The place where we stand in the reality of our previous longings. In one place God gives us a “peek”, in the other He gives us a “peak”, and more times than not, between Mizpah (peek) and Shen (peak) there is a major battle to be fought.

It’s at that place, in between the glimpse and the glory, that our faith will be tested the most. It’s not just faith to believe, but enduring faith that will continue to pursue the peak. It’s not only a test of faith, but a test of faithfulness. It’s not necessarily our faithfulness that is on trial, although that is part of it, rather it’s the faithfulness of God. Will God do

what He said He would do? Has God brought us this far to leave us? It is in the place between that Samuel took a stone and set it there and called it Ebenezer, saying “The Lord has helped us”, or the Lord is faithful. He not only promises, He also produces.

The history of Compass North Church is lined with Ebenezer stones. Moments along the way where we had to remind ourselves of the faithfulness of God. Let me encourage you today, if He did it before, He will do it again. God is faithful! If you are at a place between the peek and the peak, call to remembrance the faithfulness of God and set a memorial in your heart today. Don’t quit! Don’t lose sight of the mountain top. He who began this good work in you will be faithful to complete it!

Proverbs 29:18 says, “If people can’t see what God is doing they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed” (The Message Bible). If you’ve lost sight of the vision, ask God to reveal it to you again. Giving you eyes to see the mountain of victory He has before you. Slaughter the giants of doubt and unbelief by dropping Ebenezer stones on their heads and declaring the faithfulness of God over your life. Don’t grow weary in well doing, you will reap if you do not faint.

Pastor Joe is the lead pastor and cultural architect of Compass North Church in Akron, Ohio. Joe is a passionate communicator of God's word. He thoroughly enjoys developing leaders. He is a strategic thinker and loves to help churches plan and pursue growth. He holds a Masters in Theological Studies from Vanguard University.



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CENTER FOR NATIONAL RENEWAL

WASHINGTON, D.C.



DR. MIKE HAYES

In 2015, we were at a conference in Washington, D.C. with Churches in Covenant. I was teaching that day and had a revelation deep in my spirit: In order to make any real change in the capital city, we are going to have to be willing to drive a stake in this region. It's a biblical principle we see reflected in the journey of Israel. In Joshua 1:3, God made a promise to the nation about to enter the Promised Land. He told them, "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses." I could see it clearly. There is a certain requirement of occupation in order to have dominion in an area spiritually. It's actual people dwelling in a real place.

At that point, as a pastor, I didn't have any idea that Kathy and I would end up in Washington ourselves. I really didn't see a lot further in some ways than just doing every Sunday at our church in Carrollton. We had just enough faith to set our sights higher than they were before, take the next step, and walk into that. Often these days we look back and say, "Wow, I didn't know it was leading to this." But God knew that all the time! As to how we ended up in Washington, D.C. today.

We had prayed for the nation and its renewal. As a student of history, I began to realize the Northeast is the most historically important region in America. Within that region, Philadelphia has a rich history with Constitution Hall where our founding charter was debated and written. Important battles of the Revolutionary War were fought in and around Boston. And New York City was where the U.S. Congress first met. But one city remains the epicenter of government.

***"EVERY PLACE
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For two centuries, Washington, D.C. has been the historic place where America has become what America is today. All three branches of government—executive, legislative, and judicial—have their centers of power and decision-making here. Every U.S. President, since John Adams, has lived and worked at The White House.

The Pentagon is the center of American military operations. The State Department coordinates with global humanitarian and religious freedom groups here. Thousands of federal employees work and do life in the capital region. It's where this great nation was built. It's where it all happens.

Before that point, I had no idea this vision would involve moving to Washington ourselves and becoming as involved as we are. The Dallas/Fort Worth area had been our home since 1976. But with His calling, God gave us a love for the city. I talked to the team about it and said: "We've got to find a place here to open an office." Forming a board of directors and refining the vision, it evolved into the ministry we serve today. The Center For National Renewal is a Christian, bipartisan organization, that is committed to working for renewal in our nation by uniting ideas and influencers to effect change and promote reconciliation.

We need renewal. Individually, as the children of God and followers of Jesus, we need to be renewed in our individual commitments and allegiance to Him. Corporately, our nation needs to be renewed in its focus, healed of its wounds, and redeployed in God's mission. How can these happen? Our nation is renewed when her people are renewed. Really,



you see, it's us that need renewal. If and when we are renewed in our focus, healed of our wounds, and redeployed in God's mission, then our nation is changed.

My recent book, *Renewal*, introduces a vision for personal and national renewal that I believe can be unlocked with four keys. These represent a vital four-part process that must be carefully prayed over, thought through, and acted upon. The order of the keys and the doors they unlock is very important because they go from one to the next. These four keys are successive and holistic.

1. First, we have to start with enough compassion and faith to become active in intercession.

Through prayer, we stand in place of those in need, bringing them before the throne of our Father. When we intercede, it brings us to see: We've got things to fix. It reaffirms our faith that the solutions are as much or more spiritual as they are practical.

2. We become agents of reconciliation,

whether it be political rancor, ethnic strife, economic injustice, or in other spheres—we want to see these things reconciled, and we accept our responsibility to be part of the solution.

3. When you understand what you're praying about, that there are things to be fixed and God

has the answers, it brings you to education.

Believers should be the smartest and most engaged people in the room. God has placed us as His ambassadors in the world, to function as agents of reconciliation.

We need His insight—along with His wisdom and strategy—to share truth with others in compelling, loving, and uncompromising ways.

4. Then, we become an influence for God's kingdom,

whether it be collectively by the tens of thousands or one-on-one. When we start by hearing God's heart through intercession, operating as reconcilers, and ministers of the truth, our influence multiplies. We become a greater influence by taking this pattern and replicating it.

YOU can play a significant role in our nation's renewal! At the Center for National Renewal, we want to help equip you to be an ambassador for renewal in your world. Take a minute right now to **TEXT 'CFNR' to '41411'** for a link to take action. You can sign up to join more than 250,000 people in weekly prayer for our nation; download our free 'Spaces of Grace' reconciliation report; and find out about our DC Renewal Tour especially for our Destiny Family!

We must commit to this continuous process - **INTERCESSION, RECONCILIATION, EDUCATION, and INFLUENCE.** If we do, we'll see incredible doors of opportunity

for renewal that will be opened to us. At such a time as this, God will be glorified as His sons and daughters follow this pattern for personal and national renewal.

Dr. Mike Hayes is a reconciler. His life and ministry is characterized by connecting people in life-giving relationship with God and each other. He is a uniter - catalyzing racial reconciliation and healing for more than 40 years. As the Founding Pastor of Covenant Church, he pioneered a ministry that exemplifies covenant relationships. Flourishing in diversity, with more than 100 nations represented, Covenant Church has become a leading voice for unity and a model for transcultural, multigenerational, and multiethnic ministry.

Dr. Mike Hayes currently serves as President of Churches In Covenant, a network of churches and ministries united to bless the nations. In January of 2017, Dr. Hayes launched a new initiative focused on bringing hope and restoration to our nation. The Center for National Renewal, in Washington D.C., is a Christian organization working for renewal in our nation by uniting ideas with local and national influencers to effect change and promote reconciliation.

Dr. Mike Hayes along with his wife, Kathy, has embarked on a new journey. Leveraging decades of ministry and a wealth of influence, to see an unprecedented time of refreshing and renewal sweep across our nation and the world.

The Case for Common Sense Biblical Interpretations



PASTOR LANDON GALLOWAY

Preachers are constantly in search of new content. The demand to preach something fresh each week is a daunting task. We feel like we need to deliver something timely and unique. Thus, we frantically search for fanciful interpretations, hoping to provide something to our people that they have never heard before. We read books, scour commentaries, browse blogs, listen to podcasts, and download sermons all in an effort to stumble upon some jaw-dropping revelation.

In this frenzied attempt to make unique contributions or employ stirring illustrations, we are prone to over-interpret the biblical text. We forget that the languages of the Bible, Greek and Hebrew, are not magical languages waiting to be decoded. They are ordinary human languages that God chose to use to reveal Himself to ordinary humans. Thus, the same rules apply to biblical languages that apply to all languages. In other words, the Bible simply means what the various human authors intended it to say. We don't have to over-analyze each word and trace its history back a thousand years before the biblical era to determine its actual meaning. We have to simply ask: "What did Paul (or any other writer) mean when used this word?"

Moises Silva is a brilliant Biblical scholar and linguist. In his 1990 book, *God, Language, and Scripture*, he illustrated the absurdity of many modern methods of biblical interpretation, by including a fictional conversation

between two men, Mike and Harry. Harry begins the conversation: "Say, Mike, I heard some interesting gossip at the convention last week." Mike replies: "Oh, really? Who was being christened?" Harry is obviously confused by Mike's response and asks for clarity, to which Mike responds: "Come on, Harry!" The basic meaning of the word gossip has to do with god parenting. Everyone knows that" (p. 87)! Since Mike did not have "god parenting" in mind when he said the word "gossip," Harry should not have equated those two words. Etymology

(studying this history/roots of words) is not usually the most helpful thing in understanding what the author is actually meaning to say. A word means what it means based on context and how it is being used when it was written, rather than on everything the word can potentially mean. For example, if I said that I would like to "cultivate a friendship with you," you would have no reason to think that I was talking

about planting a garden just because the word "cultivate" has roots in the field of botany. You would understand what I meant without ever considering the botanical roots of the word.

This problem of over-interpretation is understandable, because we truly believe that the Biblical text in front of us is an inspired text. If we believe that God authored the text in question, then we are certainly inclined to see each word as significant and indispensable. This can lead to a focus on individual words, divorced from both historical context and authorial intent. Though such interpretations are creative, they fail to either fairly represent the author or

"You don't need a Ph.D. to understand what the Bible is basically trying to communicate. All you need is an English translation of the Bible, a good introductory commentary, and the power of the Holy Spirit to guide you."



to adequately illuminate the reader. We may come to some conclusion that seems enlightening, but it's not really what the original author had in mind.

Perhaps an example from Scripture might be helpful. The Greek word *doxa* is used throughout the New Testament and is generally translated as "glory." In the Greek of Jesus' day, the word typically meant "judgment or opinion", and by extension, "good reputation or honor." However, the authors of the New Testament were all Jewish (other than Luke), and for decades Greek-speaking Jews had used the word *doxa* as the equivalent of the Hebrew word for glory, *chabod*. The *chabod* described the heavy, weighty glory of God that filled the Temple and accompanied the presence of a majestic God. Since Greek didn't have a word that equated to the Hebrew notion of *chabod*, Greek speaking Jewish people adopted the word *doxa* but loaded it with all of the meaning and implications of *chabod*.

Therefore, when we read that an angel of the Lord appeared to shepherds in the field at Jesus' birth, and the glory (*doxa*) of the Lord shone around them in Luke 2, we have no reason to think that "glory" means judgment or opinion. If one is

simply doing a word study and finds that *doxa* can mean judgment, they might conclude that God's judgment was descending on the shepherds, even though Luke is communicating the exact opposite! Contextually, the glory is the majesty of God and the shepherds are blessed and exceedingly glad that they are recipients of this good news. In sum, "glory" means what Luke intended it to mean when he wrote it, and it is totally irrelevant what "glory" meant when the common Greek speaker used it. Words mean what the author intends them to mean.

In conclusion, the heart of this brief article is to encourage preachers and teachers to unashamedly proclaim the simple, straightforward message proclaimed in the text. You don't need a Ph.D. to understand what the Bible is basically trying to communicate. All you need is an English translation of the Bible, a good introductory commentary, and the power of the Holy Spirit to guide you. Find a text to preach, discover what the author intended, and discern how the Holy Spirit would apply that message today. You don't have to hit a home run every Sunday. Sometimes, a base hit that keeps an inning alive is all that is really needed.

the name of JESUS

DR. PHILLIP BRASSFIELD

Solomon was right when he said, "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe" (Proverbs 18:10). The Name of the Lord is, in many ways, the cornerstone of our faith. It is the cornerstone in the sense that all that God is and represents, all of His divine essence and identity, His virtue and qualities, not to mention His power, are invested in His name. His name is His authority. His name is His signature, and He backs it up with the weight and power of who He is.

God told Moses at the burning bush when He identified himself as, "I Am that I Am" or YHWH, "this is my name forever and my memorial to all generations" (Ex 3:15). In other words, this is who I am and will always be. This constant will be a fortress to my people from generation to generation. Oh and by the way, this forever name of God is embedded in the Jewish name for Jesus, Yeshua.

Later, God also told Israel through Moses in Deuteronomy 12 that He would bring them to a land of promise, and once they were settled, He would choose a city in that land where He would inscribe His name. There they should worship Him. When Solomon dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem, thirteen times in his dedication address and prayer he included that the city of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple was the place where God had chosen to sign His name. At the end of his prayer of dedication, God was moved and responded with what has become one of the most famous passages of Scripture: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will heal their land" (2nd Chron 7:14). As believers we are, perhaps more than anything else, people of the Name! It's the name of the Lord that is our authority, and our power and our protection. It's His name that sanctifies our rituals and religion, and makes them powerful and life changing. No, friend, there are not many different ways to get to God, and all religions do not lead to the same destination, even though we are pressured by our relativistic culture to accept this perspective. We are people of the Name, people called by His name; the name of Jesus!

The Apostle Paul writing to the Philippians in the famed second chapter of the letter of the same name says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Paul was teaching that the Name of Jesus now supersedes every other name given among men. Think about that! There is no name, identity or designation that has the

power that the name of Jesus has. No religious system, no belief system, secular or religious, that can compete.

The Apostles Peter and John demonstrated the power of the name of Jesus as they healed the lame man who lay at the Beautiful gate entrance of the Temple. He was asking for help in the form of material provision, Peter and John told him that they had no money (which would have simply funded a continuation of the man's condition), instead that they had the designated authority of the Name of Jesus to change the man's condition! They told him, "in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk", and the man's life was changed.

In these pluralistic times, let me encourage you today that our hope, help, power and purpose is found exclusively in the authority of the name of Jesus. This is why Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel (good news) of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). The gospel magna-carta of redemption is signed by the only name that can back up its claims, Jesus Christ!

Sadly, for some, the name of Jesus is simply a by-word used in profane outburst, for some it's mentioned only in skepticism, but when the name of Jesus is mentioned, no matter who speaks it, things happen. Since the day of His exaltation in Heaven following the resurrection, the entire universe is tuned to the name of Jesus. When that Name is spoken, all of Heaven stands to attention; all of creation waits for orders. Hell, sickness, disease and death tremble. Every malady and malfunction of man must bow its proverbial knee in submission.

In our pursuit of relevance (and we should seek relevance), we must not allow ourselves to become too clever, too sophisticated, or too cool for the name of Jesus. Techniques, systems, methods, in and of themselves, are powerless to change a life, but the name of Jesus can break every chain of darkness and transform the heart of man. It always has and it always will!



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