

BREAKING NEWS!

THE HELPER HAS  
COME AND NOT A  
MINUTE TOO SOON!

FILM AT ELEVEN,  
ED!

INSIDE THIS  
ISSUE

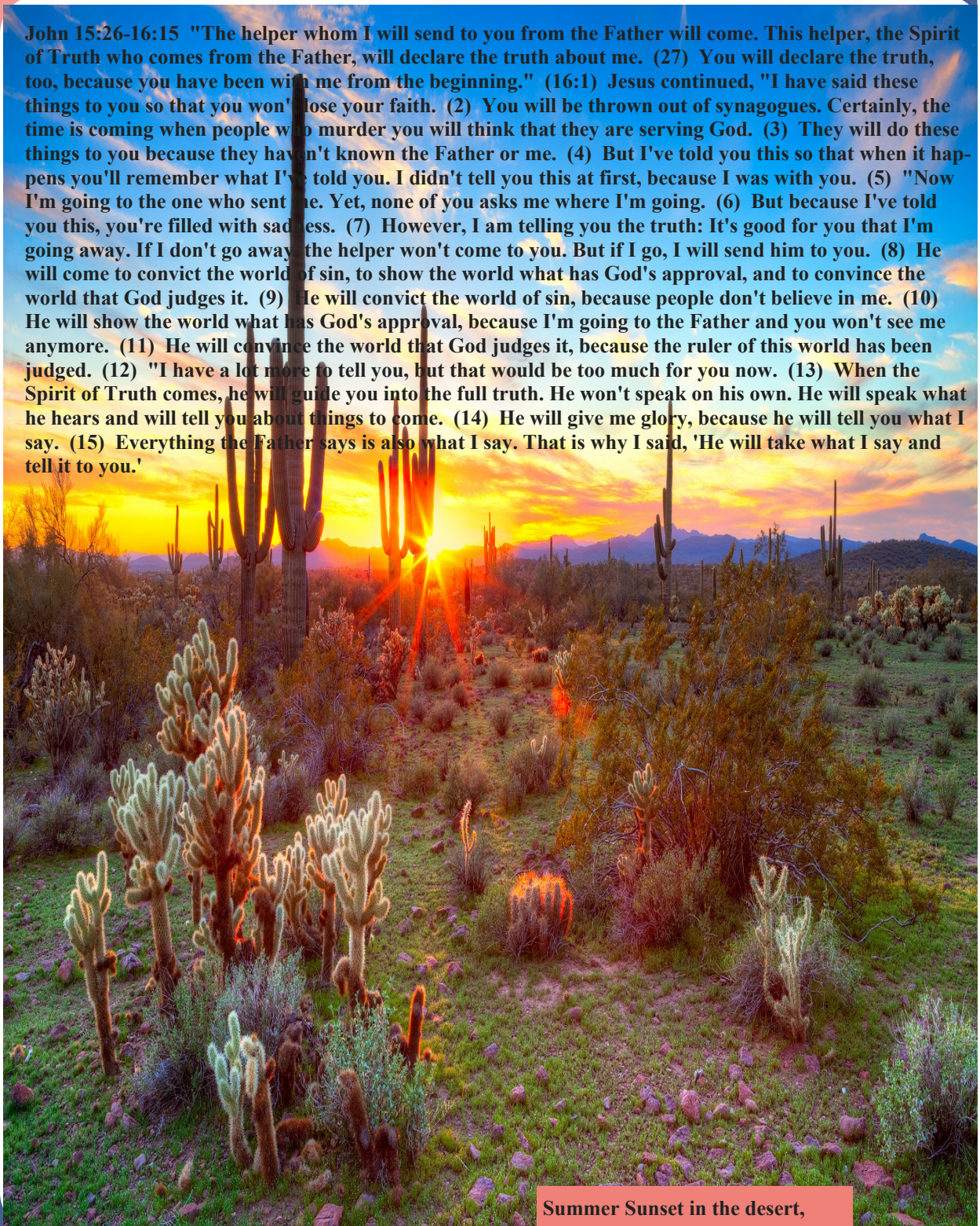
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# The Evangelical Protestant The Magazine of the Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church

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**John 15:26-16:15** "The helper whom I will send to you from the Father will come. This helper, the Spirit of Truth who comes from the Father, will declare the truth about me. (27) You will declare the truth, too, because you have been with me from the beginning." (16:1) Jesus continued, "I have said these things to you so that you won't lose your faith. (2) You will be thrown out of synagogues. Certainly, the time is coming when people who murder you will think that they are serving God. (3) They will do these things to you because they haven't known the Father or me. (4) But I've told you this so that when it happens you'll remember what I've told you. I didn't tell you this at first, because I was with you. (5) "Now I'm going to the one who sent me. Yet, none of you asks me where I'm going. (6) But because I've told you this, you're filled with sadness. (7) However, I am telling you the truth: It's good for you that I'm going away. If I don't go away, the helper won't come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. (8) He will come to convict the world of sin, to show the world what has God's approval, and to convince the world that God judges it. (9) He will convict the world of sin, because people don't believe in me. (10) He will show the world what has God's approval, because I'm going to the Father and you won't see me anymore. (11) He will convince the world that God judges it, because the ruler of this world has been judged. (12) "I have a lot more to tell you, but that would be too much for you now. (13) When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into the full truth. He won't speak on his own. He will speak what he hears and will tell you about things to come. (14) He will give me glory, because he will tell you what I say. (15) Everything the Father says is also what I say. That is why I said, 'He will take what I say and tell it to you.'



Summer Sunset in the desert,



Evangelical Protestant  
Church (GCEPC)® Inc.,

Lutheran Evangelical  
Protestant Church (LEPC)®,

# We Believe

**1. The Holy Scriptures**, in the original tongues, is the inspired and inerrant word of God. (Matthew 4:4, 2 Timothy 3:16,17)

**2. There is one God**, eternal and self-existent, Creator and Ruler of the universe, and manifested through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (John 1:18, Matthew 3:16-17) We are Trinitarian.

**3. Jesus Christ** is truly divine and truly human having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. (Matt.1: 18)

**4. Jesus Christ** died on the cross and shed His blood as a Sacrifice

for our sins; He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High. (1 John 2:2)

**5. Humankind** was created in the image of God, but fell into sin causing separation from God. (Gen. 3:1-24)

**6. Salvation** has been provided through Jesus Christ for all; and those who repent and believe on Him are born again of the Holy Spirit, receive the gift of eternal life and become the children of God. (John 1:10)

**7. Water baptism** identifies us with the death and burial of Christ and that we should arise to

walk in newness of life (Matthew 28:19-20)

**8. We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit** to glorify Christ, to convict of sin, to enable the believer to live a godly life, and to empower the Church to carry the gospel into all the world.

(Matthew 12:31, Acts 1:8.)

**9. In the personal and visible return of Jesus Christ** for His Church. (Matthew 24:30, Rev 1:7)

**10. In the bodily resurrection** of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved and everlasting separation from God of all those who reject Jesus Christ. (John 1:10-13, Rev 20:11-15)

GCEPC *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast."* Ephesians 2: 8

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## The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin  
Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and  
was buried; he descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he  
is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come  
again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the  
communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the  
resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

AMEN.

The Evangelical Protestant Journal "Kirchenbote" (Church Messenger) was established in 1885,

Gustav Schmidt became editor. In 1917, the German Evangelical churches in the Pittsburgh area began publication of a monthly entitled The Evangelical Protestant. (Archives Smithfield UCC)

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Editor Rev. Steve Bacon

# Bishop's Desk



“Not my circus, not my monkeys” has become a popular saying around the internet.

As ministers we often feel that every “circus” and every “monkey” is our concern but they are not. I have to remind myself of this saying sometime to keep myself from taking on more than I ought.

*God desires his people the called out ones, the church, to recover the lost art of hearing God*

While we are called upon to have care for all people, we are not called to care for everyone.

It might surprise you to know that with all of the people that Jesus taught, all of the people that Jesus fed, all of the people that Jesus healed that there were those obviously that he encountered during his days in Jerusalem and at the Temple that Jesus did not minister to but rather they were ministered to by others. Such an example is seen in Acts 3:2 “Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.”

Beggars were never lacking in

Jerusalem, in particular at the outer gates of the Temple. This man who was crippled from birth made his living as a beggar sitting at the Gate Beautiful and he was brought there every day for that purpose. Jesus passed his way often no doubt but never healed this man. However, one day as Peter and John came to enter the gate the man asked alms of them and when he did they gave him not silver and gold but healing in Jesus’ Name. The man stood and walked. Every one knew Him because they had all seen him at the gate often. The people all began to praise God and marvel that the man was healed and walking. Peter saw the crowd’s amazement and it provided him an opportunity to preach the gospel to those in the Temple court and to glorify the name of Jesus the resurrected and ascended Christ.

What we do not do or for some reason are not able to do may actually be a task for someone else at another time to the glory of God. God will have us in the right place at the right time with his healing and his message if we are just open to the possibility and the opportunity. God sees all and prepares all. We do not know what went on behind the scenes in God’s preparation for this man’s healing and salvation. Nor do we know what preparation was

needed for those who would receive because of this miraculous occurrence at the hands of Peter and John. But, Holy Spirit is always at work in time and space to bring together the fullness of time in such events. Perhaps the man was not yet ready for the message presented him by Peter when Jesus was walking through the Temple. Perhaps the people that needed to witness the miracle and therefore be ready to receive the gospel were not present at the times that Jesus was there but they were there when that time, that instance came to pass with Peter and John. They had a divine appointment.

We must not worry about what we are not able to do, or if we missed God, or try to do more than what He wants us to do. Holy Spirit has a plan and He works His plan. We have no need to strive. He will lead us and when we are receptive and ready He will use us and do great things. He has a place and a people for all who desire to serve him.

Have a wonderful summer and be blessed in Jesus Name.

Bishop Nancy Drew

*My greatest desire for all of our ministers is that they would have a close walk with Our Lord, learning His ways, hearing His voice, knowing Him.*

# Transition: A Message of Encouragement

By Bishop Jessica Johnston, Spirit Soul and Body Ministries



*My prayer and blessing for you is that you will discover and uncover the mysteries of God in His ways and His word. I pray for you a revelation of His grace in your life and that all lessons imparted to you through your message will become revelatory teaching for the flock of God.*

Transition. A time of change. The dictionary defines it as change from one form, state, style, or place to another; or to make a transition. We make transitions in life all the time. Some transitions are due to external factors outside of our control, some within our control. But, the transition I want to speak to is a prophetic transition. There are times and there are seasons in our walk with the Lord. There are shifts that come to move us to where God wants us to be, a new assignment, a blessing or fulfilled promise. But before the shift comes we go through a period of transition. Grace that has been apportioned for one assignment or place is now lifting to prompt movement to another assignment or place. The between place is transition. You can liken it to transition in birthing. When a woman goes into labor transition is the most difficult, most uncomfortable phase but also the shortest. It is intense. Contractions are occurring and positioning the baby for the next phase of pushing. This is the stage when mothers need the most encouragement, may feel like giving up or even doubt they can see the birth through.

Does this sound like a place you are in or have been? Prophetically speaking transition is a vulnerable time between assignments or next steps. On one hand you may be comfortable where you are but on the other hand sense a need to move on. You may be longing for the fulfillment of His word for someone, something, circumstance or situation. The shift is upon you but it's not yet time to birth the promise. You have to wait which requires endurance.

So if this is you and you are waiting and laboring don't give up. Keep your eyes on God and the promise before you. Your perseverance and endurance may be tested during this time as the enemy of your soul many times will bring distractions to try to get you to give up. But God uses what was intended for evil and turns it for good for those who are called according to His purposes. God always knows what you need to get through your transition time. He provides it. He is your labor coach, helping you to breathe and keep your eyes on the thing at hand.

Maybe you don't think about the circumstances of your life this way but God speaks prophetically to us all if we would just listen. We can know the times and seasons we are in and knowing and being aware of where you are in your journey helps you to pray effectively and be intentional in your strategy to be faithful and succeed. Jeremiah 33:3 says "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. This is the privilege and intimate relationship we have with the Father. Never give up, never give in!"



## "Outreach Opportunities"

May 26, 2015

*And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found." Luke 15:31-32*

I remember going to my first call in western South Dakota.

My congregation, which was so small it had been a permanent vacancy for 20 years, was in a state of disrepair. When I first entered the church, I found a wonderful, retired pastor, Carl Krueger, agonizing over the church membership files.

His first words to me were a pained, "They're not all here."

By that Pastor Krueger meant not all the members of the congregation who were on the books of the church deserved to be there. When I asked for an explanation, he listed four names, "Pastor Klaus, if I were you," he said, "I wouldn't expect to see these four in worship on a regular basis."

"And why not?" I queried.

"Because these four are in the cemetery," he told me.

He was right. I never did see those four in church.

And I never saw the five members who had, more than 15 years before, joined the military and made the service their lifelong work. I never saw the folks who had married and joined other congregations, but who had never transferred out. I never saw the five who were living in different states, but kept their membership at our church because they wanted to be buried in our cemetery.

On the other hand, the Holy Spirit did get back many who had been delinquent for years. Yes, He reactivated many, but not all.

Most pastors and parishes will understand. My congregation was a microcosm of what most of us have experienced.

Now I share this with you because, two weeks ago, a national survey was published which said the percentage of folks who identified themselves as Christians had dropped from 78 percent to 70 percent, and the number of unconnected souls increased from 15 percent to 23 percent.

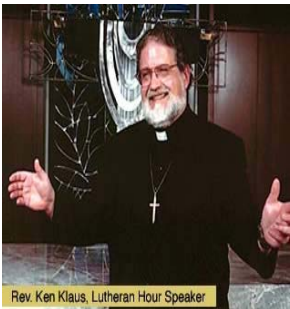
The news was met with glee and rejoicing by those who are opposed to the Savior and His work of reclaiming lost and sinful souls. From past experience, I have to say their victory is both premature and hollow. As near as I can see, the only thing which has changed is that many delinquents are being more honest than they used to be.

In other words, delinquents no longer are pretending they are affiliated with a Christian church, which is good news for us. No longer will these folks be ignored because they are listed somewhere on our books. Their honesty makes them beloved mission targets for a caring congregation of Christians who will do their absolute best to reclaim a wandering brother or floundering sister.

**THE PRAYER:** Dear Lord, let the world gloat, but grant us the grace and wisdom to try and reclaim those who have wandered or are backsliding. This we ask in the Name of the risen Redeemer. Amen



Pastor Ken Klaus  
Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour<sup>®</sup>  
Lutheran Hour Ministries.



Rev. Ken Klaus, Lutheran Hour Speaker

## Be Holy, For I Am Holy

Bishop Dr. David A. Church



Bishop Dr.  
David A.  
Church  
Director of

To reach the lost and bring them into the Kingdom of God requires that we return to *God's way* of building the Church, discarding man's methods with those given us by Jesus Christ who said "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"

"But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:15-16

Never in the entire history of the Evangelical Church has the concept of personal holiness been as disregarded as it is today by those professing to follow Christ. Sin runs as rampart within the confines of church membership as it does outside the Church. Divorce rates skyrocket as even well-known preachers desert their wives for another's, and the church accepts them back to continue "ministering" in a state of adultery. We see pastors exposed for their addictions to pornography and their adulterous affairs. Stories abound of mismanagement and the embezzlement of the funds received from donations. A leading television preacher sold the TV stations and equipment purchased with the tax free gifts of his followers and pocketed the money for himself, as though it were a private corporation owned solely by him instead of the nonprofit it was. Worship music has become a billion dollar industry, lyrics often being shallow in theology but heavy on sound, phrases repeated endlessly and mindlessly as though a mantra. Preaching becomes little more than a feel good pep talk or motivational seminar designed to give the hearer Goosebumps instead of delivering the truth that saves their souls from the destination many no longer even believe exists. Jesus has become but an addition to the other interests in a professing Christian's life, or a cosmic genie waiting to give you your heart's materialistic desires stemming from unrepentant covetousness. If anyone tries correcting these sinful attitudes in love they are called "legalists", the Christian Police, and Pharisees. They are hit with the mantra "Judge not that ye not be judged." Tell a money-preaching televangelist they are in error doctrinally and you will receive back "Touch not the Lord's anointed!" We also compare our "holiness" with that of others, feeling good about being better than the other guy, forgetting or ignoring that God's standard is the absolute and perfect obedience to the Torah at all points. God does not grade on a Bell Curve!

So the first question I ask is "What is holiness and how do I achieve it in response to the command to Be Holy?" Can absolute perfect obedience ever be accomplished by us in this lifetime, or even multiple lifetimes? What happens if we can't be perfect? Does God overlook our shortcomings? Why are some churches so legalistic, while others act like the commandments do not even matter? What is this argument over Law and Grace about anyway? Is the Law even relevant for today? Is the Bible really inerrant? Do we have the real Word of God in the Bible or is it a fabrication to control our life as claimed by atheists? Which religion is the correct one, or are they all effectively the same and equally true? Is there evidence?

These are the very questions we ponder in our search for meaning and purpose in our lives in order to answer "Why am I here, how should I live, and where am I going?" The answers to these questions are sought by peoples across the entire world and cross all cultural and national boundaries. All mythologies originate in the need to

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## Be Holy, For I Am Holy

Bishop Dr. David A. Church

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explain reality and our consciousness. Only the Bible claims to originate with God, and is the revelatory story of Creation, our Fall, and the Redemption of members of the human race that find favor with God only by His Grace because they believe His revelation and receive His love and forgiveness through Faith in Christ.

In a moral sense, holiness is to be pure, sinless, upright and without fault. God is perfectly holy in all His ways and also in His very essence and Being. God is Love, Love being the greatest attribute of God and is the greatest gift of the Holy Spirit according to the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, the more excellent way he says in chapter 12. It is also listed in Galatians 5:22 as the first fruit of the Spirit, possibly the only fruit with the rest of the list being attributes or characteristics of Love. Jesus is the pinnacle of love in action, demonstrated through healing the sick and infirmed, and ultimately healing the one sickness at the root of all others, our sin.

Love for the world (meaning all people) is what moved the Father to send His only begotten Son to be tortured and slain in the most horrible method imaginable, taking the punishment due us for our trespasses against the Law and will of God.

Love sent Christ, and only love for us held Him on the Cross. To cry out to the Lord for salvation yet refuse to follow Him and obey His commandments is the peak of selfishness and ingratitude. The Scripture states in 1 John 4:19 "We love Him because He first loved us." But do we really love Him? Jesus also says in John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments." So is the statement "If you don't love Me, you will not keep my commandments" a valid rephrasing of the statement and its interpretation?" Logically speaking, an irrefutable "Yes." We do not keep His commandments because we do not love Him enough to consider His feelings, and to refuse to be obedient to His authority is a rejection of Him as Lord, meaning God's right to rule your life is contested. This is the sin of pride, as insane as that which gripped Lucifer in his rebellion against the Most High, thinking to make himself as God. This also is the sin that brought down Adam and Eve, pride to become as God, knowing good and evil. One of the best and concise definitions of pride I've ever seen is "Here is the essence of the pride of life—anything that exalts us above our station and offers the illusion of God-like qualities, wherein we boast in arrogance and worldly wisdom." (<http://www.gotquestions.org/pride-of-life.html>). If we are not in obedience to Jesus Christ, the King and Lord of the universe, we are outlaws in the Kingdom of God. Outlaws in any kingdom are living under a death sentence if they are not forgiven and pardoned by the king, and a pardon for the rebellion demands sworn fealty to the king and to the laws of the kingdom, and the demonstration of it in keeping the commandments of the king. Why should we not see the Kingdom of God in this manner? To live in obedience, separation from the world's continued rebellion is "holiness."

## Hard things God has us to Do...

*There are times when we know that the Lord wants us to do something that seems contrary to His nature of love but what is really going on is God's "tough love." He may have us remove things and people from our life for various reasons. He may require us to hold others accountable in some vary hard ways. God never forgot how the Amalekites treated Israel when he was bringing them out of Egypt. Israel was attacked by them when they were at their weakest and needed help to get to their destination. From then on God purposed to destroy the Amalekites because He knew what was in their hearts. This article by Matt Slick, President and Founder of the Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry will help us understand.*

*Bishop Nancy Drew*



President and Founder of the Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry. Matt earned his Bachelors in Social Science from Concordia University, Irvine, CA, in 1988. He earned his Masters of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary in Escondido, CA, in 1991. He now resides in the Boise, Idaho area with his family. He is ordained. Matt started CARM in October of 1995 to respond to the many false teachings of

### Why would God order the destruction of men, women, and children?

By Matt Slick

"Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. 3 'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey,'" (1 Samuel 15:2-3).

The Amalekites, who were descendents of Esau, had been longtime enemies of Israel. They fought against Israel at Rephidim (Exodus 17:8). Apparently, they "entertained a deep-seated grudge against them, especially as the rapid prosperity and marvelous experience of Israel showed that the blessing contained in the birthright [Jacob and Esau] was taking effect.

"1 They were a constant threat to Israel. Therefore, God said to Moses in Exodus 17:14 "Write this in a book as a memorial, and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

God lawfully has the right to execute judgment upon anyone. The Bible says that all people have sinned against God and are under his righteous judgment. Therefore, their execution is not an arbitrary killing nor is it murder. Murder is the unlawful taking of life. Killing is the lawful taking of life. For example, we can lawfully take a life in defense of our selves, our families, our nations, etc.

When God authorizes the nation of Israel to wipe out a people, it is a lawful execution due to their rebellion and sin against God. Furthermore, such an extermination can be seen to be merciful by delivering the young into the hands of the Lord and possibly saving their souls by not giving them time to become "utterly sinful".<sup>2</sup> Additionally, further generations that would have arisen from the perverse culture, are likewise prevented from coming into existence and spreading their sin.

*(Continued on page 9)*



## Hard things God has us to Do...

(Continued from page 8)

Finally, one of the reasons that the Lord is so strong in the Old Testament and orders the killing of people is to ensure that the future messianic line would remain intact. The enemy, Satan, began his attempt to destroy God's people in the Garden of Eden, by also trying to corrupt the world (which led to Noah's Flood), by trying to destroy Israel with attacking armies, and by encouraging Israel to fall into idolatry by exposure to other cultures as well as intermarrying women from those cultures. The result of both the idolatry and the interbreeding would have been the failure of the prophecies that foretold of the coming Messiah which specified which family line the Messiah would come through. The Messiah, Jesus, would be the one who would die for the sins of the world and without that death there would be no atonement. Without the atonement, all people would be lost. So, God was ensuring the arrival of the Messiah via the destruction of the ungodly.

1. Jamieson, R., A. R. Fausset, and D. Brown, A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments, Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997, Ex 17:8.  
<https://carm.org/bible-difficulties/joshua-esther/why-would-god-order-destruction-men-women-and-children>



# Want millennials back in the pews? Stop trying to make church 'cool.'

By Rachel Held Evans

Bass reverberates through the auditorium floor as a heavily bearded worship leader pauses to invite the congregation, bathed in the light of two giant screens, to tweet using #JesusLives. The scent of freshly brewed coffee wafts in from the lobby, where you can order macchiatos and purchase mugs boasting a sleek church logo. The chairs are comfortable, and the music sounds like something from the top of the charts. At the end of the service, someone will win an iPad.

This, in the view of many churches, is what millennials like me want. And no wonder pastors think so. Church attendance has plummeted among young adults. In the United States, 59 percent of people ages 18 to 29 with a Christian background have, at some point, dropped out. According to the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, among those of us who came of age around the year 2000, a solid quarter claim no religious affiliation at all, making my generation significantly more disconnected from faith than members of Generation X were at a comparable point in their lives and twice as detached as baby boomers were as young adults.

In response, many churches have sought to lure millennials back by focusing on style points: cooler bands, hipper worship, edgier programming, impressive technology. Yet while these aren't inherently bad ideas and might in some cases be effective, they are not the key to drawing millennials back to God in a lasting and meaningful way. Young people don't simply want a better show. And trying to be cool might be making things worse.

You're just as likely to hear the words "market share" and "branding" in church staff meetings these days as you are in any corporate office. Megachurches such as Saddleback in Lake Forest, Calif., and Lakewood in Houston have entire marketing departments devoted to enticing new members. Kent Shaffer of ChurchRelevance.com routinely ranks the best logos and Web sites and offers strategic counsel to organizations like Saddleback and LifeChurch.tv.

Increasingly, churches offer sermon series on iTunes and concert-style worship services with names like "Vine" or "Gather." The young-adult group at Ed Young's Dallas-based Fellowship Church is called Prime, and one of the singles groups at his father's congregation in Houston is called Vertical. Churches have made news in recent years for giving away tablet computers, TVs and even cars at Easter. Still, attendance among young people remains flat.

Recent research from Barna Group and the Cornerstone Knowledge Network found that 67 percent of millennials prefer a "classic" church over a "trendy" one, and 77 percent would choose a "sanctuary" over an "auditorium." While we have yet to warm to the word "traditional" (only 40 percent favor it over "modern"), millennials exhibit

*(Continued on page 11)*

"I have come to regard with some suspicion those who claim that the Bible never troubles them. I can only assume this means they haven't actually read it."

-RACHEL HELD EVANS  
#BiblicalWomanhood

Rachel Held Evans is a blogger and the author of "Searching for Sunday: Loving, Leaving, and Finding the Church."

## Want millennials back in the pews? Stop trying to make church 'cool.'

By Rachel Held Evans

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an increasing aversion to exclusive, closed-minded religious communities masquerading as the hip new places in town. For a generation bombarded with advertising and sales pitches, and for whom the charge of "inauthentic" is as cutting an insult as any, church rebranding efforts can actually backfire, especially when young people sense that there is more emphasis on marketing Jesus than actually following Him. Millennials "are not disillusioned with tradition; they are frustrated with slick or shallow expressions of religion," argues David Kinnaman, who interviewed hundreds of them for Barna Group and compiled his research in "You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church . . . and Rethinking Faith."

My friend and blogger Amy Peterson put it this way: "I want a service that is not sensational, flashy, or particularly 'relevant.' I can be entertained anywhere. At church, I do not want to be entertained. I do not want to be the target of anyone's marketing. I want to be asked to participate in the life of an ancient-future community."

Millennial blogger Ben Irwin wrote: "When a church tells me how I should feel ('Clap if you're excited about Jesus!'), it smacks of inauthenticity. Sometimes I don't feel like clapping. Sometimes I need to worship in the midst of my brokenness and confusion — not in spite of it and certainly not in denial of it."

When I left church at age 29, full of doubt and disillusionment, I wasn't looking for a better-produced Christianity. I was looking for a truer Christianity, a more authentic Christianity: I didn't like how gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people were being treated by my evangelical faith community. I had questions about science and faith, biblical interpretation and theology. I felt lonely in my doubts. And, contrary to popular belief, the fog machines and light shows at those slick evangelical conferences didn't make things better for me. They made the whole endeavor feel shallow, forced and fake.

While no two faith stories are exactly the same, I'm not the only millennial whose faith couldn't be saved by lacquering on a hipper veneer. According to Barna Group, among young people who don't go to church, 87 percent say they see Christians as judgmental, and 85 percent see them as hypocritical. A similar study found that "only 8% say they don't attend because church is 'out of date,' undercutting the notion that all churches need to do for Millennials is to make worship 'cooler.'"

In other words, a church can have a sleek logo and Web site, but if it's judgmental and

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## Want millennials back in the pews? Stop trying to make church 'cool.'

By Rachel Held Evans

*(Continued from page 11)*

exclusive, if it fails to show the love of Jesus to all, millennials will sniff it out. Our reasons for leaving have less to do with style and image and more to do with substantive questions about life, faith and community. We're not as shallow as you might think.

If young people are looking for congregations that authentically practice the teachings of Jesus in an open and inclusive way, then the good news is the church already knows how to do that. The trick isn't to make church cool; it's to keep worship weird.

You can get a cup of coffee with your friends anywhere, but church is the only place you can get ashes smudged on your forehead as a reminder of your mortality. You can be dazzled by a light show at a concert on any given weekend, but church is the only place that fills a sanctuary with candlelight and hymns on Christmas Eve. You can snag all sorts of free swag for brand loyalty online, but church is the only place where you are named a beloved child of God with a cold plunge into the water. You can share food with the hungry at any homeless shelter, but only the church teaches that a shared meal brings us into the very presence of God.

What finally brought me back, after years of running away, wasn't lattes or skinny jeans; it was the sacraments. Baptism, confession, Communion, preaching the Word, anointing the sick — you know, those strange rituals and traditions Christians have been practicing for the past 2,000 years. The sacraments are what make the church relevant, no matter the culture or era. They don't need to be repackaged or re-branded; they just need to be practiced, offered and explained in the context of a loving, authentic and inclusive community.

My search has led me to the Episcopal Church, where every week I find myself, at age 33, kneeling next to a gray-haired lady to my left and a gay couple to my right as I confess my sins and recite the Lord's Prayer. No one's trying to sell me anything. No one's desperately trying to make the Gospel hip or relevant or cool. They're just joining me in proclaiming the great mystery of the faith — that Christ has died, Christ has risen, and Christ will come again — which, in spite of my persistent doubts and knee-jerk cynicism, I still believe most days.

One need not be an Episcopalian to practice sacramental Christianity. Even in Christian communities that don't use sacramental language to describe their activities, you see people baptizing sinners, sharing meals, confessing sins and helping one another through difficult times. Those services with big screens and professional bands can offer the sacraments, too.

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"I have come to regard with some suspicion those who claim that the Bible never troubles them. I can only assume this means they haven't actually read it."

-RACHEL HELD EVANS  
#BiblicalWomanhood



Rachel Held Evans is a blogger and the author of "Searching for Sunday: Loving, Leaving, and Finding the Church."

## Want millennials back in the pews? Stop trying to make church 'cool.'

By Rachel Held Evans

But I believe that the sacraments are most powerful when they are extended not simply to the religious and the privileged, but to the poor, the marginalized, the lonely and the left out. This is the inclusivity so many millennials long for in their churches, and it's the inclusivity that eventually drew me to the Episcopal Church, whose big red doors are open to all — conservatives, liberals, rich, poor, gay, straight and even perpetual doubters like me.

Church attendance may be dipping, but God can survive the Internet age. After all, He knows a thing or two about resurrection.

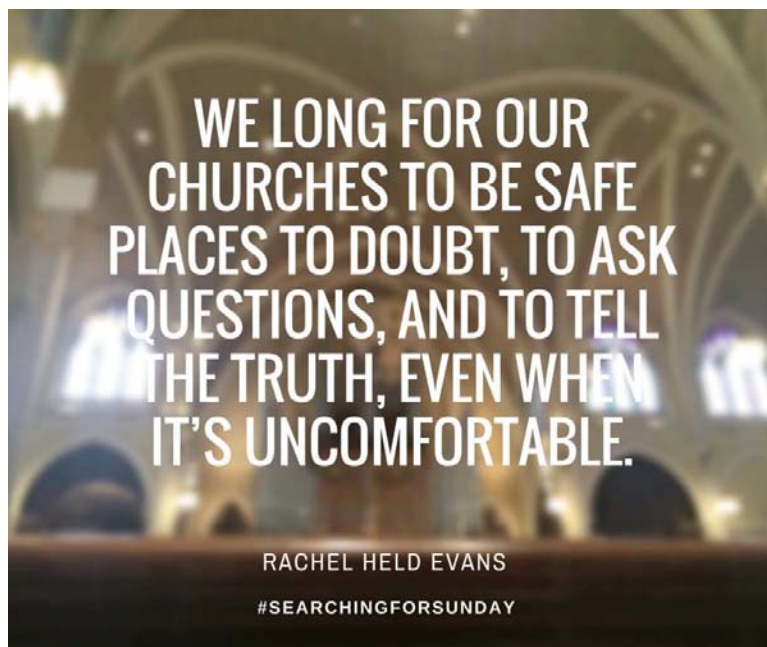
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[http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/jesus-doesnt-tweet/2015/04/30/fb07ef1a-ed01-11e4-8666-a1d756d0218e\\_story.html?postshare=571430425649860](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/jesus-doesnt-tweet/2015/04/30/fb07ef1a-ed01-11e4-8666-a1d756d0218e_story.html?postshare=571430425649860)

The views expressed in this opinion article are solely those of their author and are not necessarily either shared or endorsed by LEPC

*Ed Note: We believe homosexuality to be intrinsically sinful and pray that gay people see their sinfulness and seek forgiveness while changing their behavior. As a sinful human being, the homosexual is accountable to God for homosexual thoughts, words and deeds.*



# FIGHTING FOR THE UNBORN!

Bishop Nancy Drew



Bishop Nancy Drew

I have talked to, known of and about Mr. Johnny for many years. He is a regular courageous presence in the five-way road median between the K-mart and the Piggie Park BBQ just a few minutes from my house. On the days when he is not at this post he is faithfully stationed in other areas of the metropolitan Columbia area or across the State of South Carolina including the State Capitol building. His wife, Kathy, is often with him. They have been a voice for the unborn for the past 24 years come rain or come shine in the blazing sun of summer or bundled up to the hilt in freezing winter. I've seen Mr. Johnny walking up and down the long median preaching the gospel concerning the unborn. Raising his hand high in the air to wave to passersby, walking by the cars talking to individuals with a doll in a baby carrier around his neck, sometime pushing a stroller, always carrying his big red and white stop abortion sign.



Those few minutes at the traffic signal can change lives, hearts, minds and save lives. Mr. Johnny said, "I remember so well a lady, a few years ago, came up to me and said, 'This is my 5 year old daughter. You spoke to me through the car window as I stopped when I was pregnant, and I changed my mind and decided to have the baby'."

( From The State Newspaper 5/19/15 SC Capitol Building )



Mr. Johnny says he decided years ago after his conversion to Christ to make a spectacle of himself to call attention to the plight of unborn children. He has been faithful to the call. "After I got saved, I thought that maybe The Lord wanted me to be a preacher. But there were things in my past that seemed against that. For some reason, about 13 years ago, 1991, I felt lead to stand against abortion out in public. I had no idea how to do it. But I thought, if He wants me to do this, He'll show me how. Most of the way, I've had to support this effort with secular jobs. The last year or so [since about late 2002], I've been able to do this full time." Johnny Gardner travels ministering in churches and teaching on God's view of abortion and making sure the unborn are not forgotten.

I've heard people ridicule Mr. Johnny Gardner and his call in the college classroom to their shame.

## FIGHTING FOR THE UNBORN!

Bishop Nancy Drew

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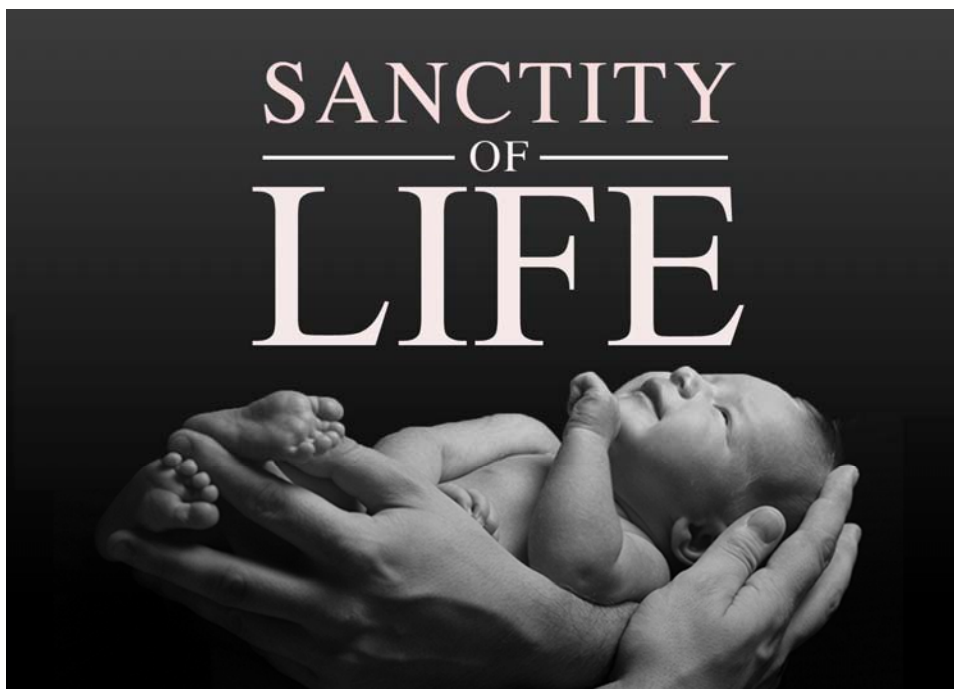
Some people might say he is a nut but he is far from that. "Johnny Gardner has made a life commitment to challenge every-day people in his sphere of influence to think about an awful topic (abortion) by becoming a topic of conversation, himself." (The Truth..What is it? 1) He is a prophet of God of the Old Testament kind like Elijah or the New Testament, John the Baptist, a voice crying in the wilderness, who were themselves ridiculed and whose appearance attracted attention for the purpose of the gospel.

I'm including this tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Gardner in our Evangelical Protestant magazine to honor the work that he has done and to show to all of us what unselfish commitment looks like.

Thank you, Mr. Johnny on behalf of the unborn. On Tuesday May 19, 2015 after days of threatened filibusters, the SC Senate finally acted, passing a bill that would bar abortions at the 20th week of pregnancy with exceptions for the life of the mother, and cases of rape, incest or severe fetal anomaly. There is still much work to be done on this between the House and the Senate but we take what we can get and Mr. Johnny keeps walking and talking as a voice of the unborn. Johnny Gardner is director of Voice of the Unborn, a Columbia, S. C. anti-abortion Christian organization. Psalm 127:3 is lifted up, "Lo: children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward."



cited: 1. <https://poptop.hypermart.net/testjg.htm>



# Christians need to face the bad news about Christianity

Michael Brendan Dougherty



Michael Brendan Dougherty is senior correspondent at TheWeek.com. He is the founder and editor of The Slurve, a newsletter about baseball. His work has appeared in The New York Times Magazine, ESPN Magazine, Slate and The American Conservative.

Christianity is declining in the United States, according to new Pew surveys. And I have some news for my fellow Christians: This is actually bad news for Christianity.

That may seem obvious, but Russell Moore, an online acquaintance, a Baptist minister, and president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty commission thinks there is a lot of upside to the rise of people who don't identify with a religion, otherwise known as the "Nones." For him, they indicate the falling away of semi-Christians, and the declining cachet of Christianity as an empty social-marker. He writes:

Christianity isn't normal anymore, and that's good news. The Book of Acts, like the Gospels before it, shows us that the Christianity thrives when it is, as Kierkegaard put it, a sign of contradiction. Only a strange gospel can differentiate itself from the worlds we construct. But the strange, freakish, foolish old gospel is what God uses to save people and to resurrect churches (1 Cor. 1:20-22).

We do not have more atheists in America. We have more honest atheists in America. Again, that's good news. The gospel comes to sinners, not to the righteous. It is easier to speak a gospel to the lost than it is to speak a gospel to the kind-of-saved.

Moore is right that as Christianity becomes less of a "default" religious affiliation, Christians have a greater opportunity to make a fresh appeal. But I think a case can be made for the fallen-away, for backsliders, the lukewarm, the non-practicing, the "cafeteria Catholics," and the "cultural Christians."

Yes, some of the rise of the "Nones" are the result of atheists and agnostics being more honest with themselves. But look at Barna Group's more sophisticated surveys of how people feel about church: 51 percent say it is "not too" or "not at all" important. Then look

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# Christians need to face the bad news about Christianity

Michael Brendan Dougherty

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at statistics that drill down into church attendance: More than half of millennials and Gen Xers say they have not been to church in the last six months.

These are troubling signs.

Fewer millennials going to church does mean fewer "cultural Christians." But does cleansing Christianity really outweigh the repercussions from letting the number of faithful dwindle?

When Billy Graham was preaching to Madison Square Garden, he wasn't addressing a coliseum of "Nones" but people with a variety of church-y backgrounds. Many of them probably had a previous relationship not just with God, but with the hymn "Just As I Am," that played whenever he called them forward to make a decision for Christ. It was a revival, not a mass conversion.

Fewer "cultural Christians" also means a smaller population of Americans whose first instinct will be to defend their church from secularism in the cultural and political field. Like counterfeit bills, the presence of fake-Christians is a sign that the real thing is considered valuable. Cafeteria Catholics are proof that the Church is still serving something people feel the need to sample. The lack of semi-Christians might not be a moment of clarity, but a sign that our churches are boring, offering self-help pabulum (sic), rather than salvation.

At bottom, there may be some confessional reasons why Moore likes the more stark contrast between an honest "none" and a convinced Christian. Evangelical Protestantism converts people with bold proclamations, and invites them to

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# Christians need to face the bad news about Christianity

Michael Brendan Dougherty



Michael Brendan Dougherty is senior correspondent at TheWeek.com. He is the founder and editor of The Slurve, a newsletter about baseball. His work has appeared in The New York Times Magazine, ESPN Magazine, Slate and The American Conservative.

a clear decision. For Catholics like me, divine grace catches sinners with G.K. Chesterton's fictive detective, "an unseen hook and an invisible line which is long enough to let him wander to the ends of the world and still to bring him back with a twitch upon the thread."

The only good news in the reported plunge for Christians is that it alerts us to the sorry state of our churches. It's not just the rise of "honesty" among atheists, but a rise in the number of people who Christianity isn't reaching at all. It should be seen less as an opportunity for growth than a sign of decay and dissolution.

<http://theweek.com/>

The views expressed in this opinion article are solely those of their author and are not necessarily either shared or endorsed by LEPC

Ed note: *This is indeed an opportunity for spreading the Gospel, I see the glass as half full, he sees it as half empty. People are the church, not denominations or buildings. It is time to get busy!*



**Mark 16:15**



**DARKNESS to LIGHT**  
END CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE



Bishop  
Nancy Drew

The EPC GCEPC/LEPC supports Darkness to Light in its efforts to stop child sexual abuse. You may have attended one of our General Conference meetings where a Darkness to Light representative gave us a presentation on recognizing sexual abuse and what to do when it is encountered. As Ministers we are mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse. This article gives brief information with more complete information available at [www.d2L.org](http://www.d2L.org) to use to teach and share with other ministers, your own ministry or church.

5 Steps to Protecting Our Children and other resources can be download at the Darkness to Light website. The 5 Steps to Protecting Our Children™ is an introductory guide for responsible adults interested in the prevention of child sexual abuse. The 5 Steps outline the Darkness to Light core principles for preventing, recognizing, and reacting responsibly to child sexual abuse, and form the framework for the adult training program, Stewards of Children.

### What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Any sexual act between an adult and a minor or between two minors when one exerts power over the other.

Forcing, coercing or persuading a child to engage in any type of sexual act. It also includes non-contact acts such as exhibitionism, exposure to pornography, voyeurism, and communicating in a sexual manner by phone or Internet.

An agonizing and traumatic experience for its victims.

A crime punishable by law.

Personal empowerment helps provide adults with the capacity and momentum to take action against child sexual abuse. With personal empowerment, we can make choices, take risks, and support each other - the foundation of The 5 Steps.

### Making Choices

We have the ability - both in our organizations and in our families - to make proactive choices that protect children and keep them safe from sexual abuse. If we want our children to be happy and healthy, we have to make choices which support that goal.

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**DARKNESS to LIGHT**  
END CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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## Taking Risks

Choices often involve some personal risk that takes us outside our comfort zones - like talking to children about sexual boundaries, redirecting an adult who's crossing boundaries, or making an actual report. Sometimes we have to take risks, even if we are uncertain or don't know the outcome, to make sure a child is protected.

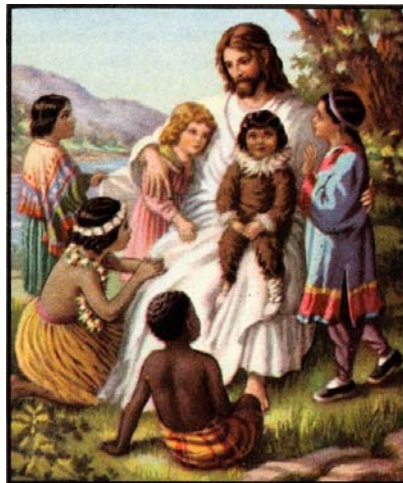
## Supporting Each Other

When children take their first steps, ride their first bikes, or climb into the driver's seat for the first time, there is usually someone beside them providing guidance and support. It's easier to take big steps when you know you have someone on your side, ready to lend a hand if you need it. As communities, as organizations, and as individuals, we can give support to others' efforts to prevent child sexual abuse, and we can ask for support when we need it.

## THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.

Child sexual abuse is a very complex problem, and these steps touch on only a small part of it. For a more in-depth understanding of child sexual abuse prevention, take Stewards of Children training.

The information we provide is not a substitute for the advice of professionals. It is only to give you simple, proactive steps to help protect children.





A.J. Castellitto is a freelance writer who resides in NJ with his wife and five children. He holds a B.S. in Counseling and Human Services from the University of Scranton and his writings have been published at The Center for Western Journalism, The Christian Post, Intellectual Conservative and Reformed Perspective Magazine.

## Exposed: The Trappings and snares of 'ME Christianity'

A.J. Castellitto May 28, 2015 at 6:23pm

They are all signs of self-absorbed immaturity (most prominently in the spiritual sense); and for the most part, I've been guilty of them all. When we take our eye off the ball, we are most assuredly setting ourselves up for a major fall.

For the Christian, Jesus is our light and our guide. He is revealed in the living word of God.

The Bible contains blessed instruction and spiritual nourishment for the thirsting, passionate disciple of God. It is when we stray in our application and obedience that we grow complacent, proud, frustrated, irritable, overwhelmed, depressed, and ultimately unfaithful.

The Good News of the Bible is not about us; rather, it is for us. We must rightfully be inclined to share and serve others (starting with those in our very household). We cannot maintain ourselves as the center of our universe. The Lord must be magnified. He is our comfort, our refuge, and our focus.

We needn't be annihilated, but we'd better find our strength and our wisdom in the living word. When we don't, it's bound to all go terribly wrong. Here are just a few examples of how so. (If you see yourself in any of these profiles, acknowledge it, and flee from the 'Christian ME.')

**The Paralyzed Christian** – Those who are so wrapped up in their sins and offenses that they cannot even bring themselves to the throne of grace and see the loving, merciful arms of the Savior who is ready and willing to fill hearts and carry burdens. They reside within the pale of spiritual law and carnal despair and cannot find the place of forgiveness. It lies outside themselves. It is where they must dwell.

**The Legalistic Christian** – These are the sin sniffers, the rule-makers and the finger-pointers. They are quick to cast the first stone. They are the Pharisees. They hide their own fragile insecurities behind an air of superiority. Jesus is their carnal shield and their license to wound, but He will never be their Savior.

**The Mystical Christian** – They are those who speak of lofty experience. They await the spirit to move them. They are waiting on a sign. They are on deck, but they never arrive; nor do they accept their own obligation and responsibility. They are so busy letting go, handing over the reigns, and waiting on the Lord for a directive that they've rendered themselves unfruitful. They have buried their talents and hidden their light under a bushel. They're sitting in the sanctuary waiting for the call, but they've yet to take any faithful risks. They are not owning their faith, nor are they living it out. They are using God as a crutch because standing firm in living faith and obedience while confronting the tough circumstance would require too much devotion and accountability. It would require them to take what they know (and so undeservingly received) and take on the world. They are cowards for Christ. It's easier to sit back and just let God

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## Exposed: The Trappings and snares of 'ME Christianity'

*(Continued from page 21)*

do it. The inconvenient reality for them is that He already has, and now He expects them to go out and live it. They are to share the Good Word and glorify God for the redemption (and tragically, the condemnation) of sinners everywhere.

**The Working Christian** – They have a miraculous story to tell and live the rest of their lives living up to that one radical conversion experience. Their home is the workhouse. They are ultimately their own slave and their own master. Every sin is a bitter disappointment, while every act of faith is a greater confirmation. Life is a series of catastrophic missteps and fulfilled expectations; but in the end, they are merely going it alone. Their insecurities are woefully misplaced. Tragically, they dwell in a prison of their own design.

**The Barely Christian** – They are the Christian musician, the Christian publisher, the Christian builder, and the Christian plumber. Christ is their calling card and their marketing ploy. He is their key selling point. They are corporate and political Christians. They worship social justice, holy wars, and golden rules. They are pragmatic and peace-loving religious humanists. Their Christianity comes at no cost. It's merely a no sacrifice required form of spirituality that they are living. Christianity is their cover. They are cultural Christians; but tragically instead of transforming the culture to Christ, they embrace all that the world has to offer them. They are globally conformed and compromised. They're merely peddling a secular agenda. They market and sell Christianity – a cheap imitation thereof. They are Christian out of convenience; yet they are hardly so. They are shallow professors. They are mere pretenders tainting the faith. In the worst case, Christianity is the flag they wave to trigger, expand, and ignite a military industrial complex. Ultimately, their masks will come off; in fact, their true identity is already showing. In the end, they got nothing.

**The Narcissistic Christian** – They are the date setters. They've uncovered hidden revelation and have broken from the faithful denomination. They refuse to be taught; yet they hold the key to unlocked mysteries. They have the inside track. Those who've come before lack the illumination they bring. They are the Harold Campings, the Ellen G. Whites, and the Benny Hinns. They hold the faithful insight. They are anointed and self-appointed. The power of healing lies in their spiritually-gifted, supernaturally-charged hands. They are the religious charlatans. They have been designated by God to deliver a timely message. They have Jesus on speed dial. The current day reveals a hidden truth, and they've been sent by God to decode it. We are no longer wandering in the dark, but will they?

And so the traps and snares abound for those who forget where true life is found!

Again, we must flee such ME's.....you know where to go!

Peace and loving service is to be had in the revealed word of God, the fellowship of believers, humble prayer, confession of sin, and participation in the holy sacraments of faith (i.e. the Lord's Supper). May we be restored and sanctified by the living Word, and may the world be our mission field.

\* My Thanks to Dr. Phillip Cary for the faithful insight and inspiration

<http://www.westernjournalism.com/exposed-the-trappings-and-snares-of-me-christianity/>

The views expressed in this opinion article are solely those of their author and are not necessarily either shared or endorsed by LEPC

## IF NOT FOR PENTECOST

by Bishop Nancy Drew



Bishop  
Nancy Drew

Now, Jesus had ascended to Heaven and the Apostles, the women, Mary the mother of Jesus and others were taking the Sabbath Day walk back from the Mt of Olivet to Jerusalem. I've made that walk myself. The Sabbath Day walk reference indicates the distance of about .56 of a mile that they were taking back to Jerusalem where they were staying in the upper room. I have been there, also, and it is a large open area on the second floor. During this time of waiting they were to give themselves to prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit as Jesus had promised.

John had baptized with water; now Jesus said that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit for the receiving of power to be Jesus' witnesses before they set about their task of "turning the world upside down" and spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth beginning at Jerusalem. Just as Jesus said, the Mighty Ruach Ha Chodesh (Holy Spirit) wind came with great tongues of fire settling on each one present and they were endued with power. After that they went into the streets and Peter preached. Three thousand people from many different nationalities who were in Jerusalem for the holidays heard the gospel preached in their native tongue though the Apostles did not know the language they spoke. It would not have happened if not for Pentecost.

By the time of the publishing of the Evangelical Protestant Magazine we will have looked back and celebrated Pentecost Sunday and the birth of the Church but what of the power that was received and experienced at that time? We need the power of the Holy Spirit today as well. I have had those who have asked for prayer for them to receive this baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is a serious but joyful thing to experience. All that gathered in the upper room were praying and making themselves ready for the Holy Spirit though they did not know exactly what to expect but when He came they knew it was Him. I have seen 6 ft 3 inch men fall on the ground under God's power when the Holy Spirit came. I have heard the Holy Spirit take over their tongues. I have seen them cry with joy and experience healing at the Holy Spirit's touch. I have also seen those where nothing happened. Some are not prepared because they need healing of wounds first. A beautiful young lady came forward in a seminar on the gifts of the Holy Spirit distraught because religious leaders had spoken words of condemnation over her, telling her she could never receive the Holy Spirit because of this or that or the other thing. They were wrong. After a few minutes of praying for healing and watching the Holy Spirit gently touch her, with tears streaming down her face she began to sing beautifully in another language. Her whole countenance changed. She received power to be His witness. Those in the church who knew her story gave glory to God. It would not have happened if not for Pentecost.

If you are interested in learning more about the baptism in the Holy Spirit that Jesus spoke of and that came at Pentecost you might enjoy reading this article by Lee Grady. It is featured here in its entirety. I recommend Mr. Grady's BlogSpot to you and his books as well. The

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## 6 Things That Block the Holy Spirit's Power

by J. LEE GRADY

*(Continued from page 23)*

The Holy Spirit came that day we call Pentecost to endue with power but He did not leave. He is still here to teach us whatever Jesus has taught and tells Him to teach. He will teach you about Himself, about Jesus and what Jesus wants you to know about His power to be His witness. Pentecost blessings!



Is there anything blocking you from receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit?  
(Vitaly Vitorsky)\*

## 6 Things That Block the Holy Spirit's Power by J. LEE GRADY

Last weekend while I was preaching at a church in central California, a young man came to the altar to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. He was eager to go deeper spiritually. Someone prayed for him for a while, but nothing happened.

I walked over to the young man a few minutes later and told him I would pray for him some more after the meeting was dismissed. I've learned that sometimes there are blockages that can prevent people from receiving the fullness of the Spirit, so I always try to discern what must be moved out of the way.

In this guy's case, his heart was in a great deal of pain because his father had abandoned his family. He wanted God to baptize him with the Spirit, but the pain of rejection was like a gaping wound that needed urgent attention. As soon as I began to address this problem, he began sobbing in my arms.

After we prayed about his father issues, and he got the healing he needed, he quickly received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. A fresh joy filled his heart. And a new heavenly language began pouring out of his mouth. I encouraged him to pray in tongues for a while as he received the Spirit's anointing.

This next Sunday, May 24, is the official day of Pentecost—when Christians all over the world celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church. But Pentecost should also be a very personal experi-

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J. Lee Grady is an author, award-winning journalist and ordained minister. For 17 years he worked for *Christa* magazine, one of America's most widely distributed evangelical Christian publications, and he served as editor for 11 of those years. He is the author of four books including *10 Lies the Church Tells Women*, and he focuses much of his ministry on releasing women in ministry. He has taken his message to 24 countries. Lee and his wife, Deborah, have four daughters. They live near Orlando, Florida.

## 6 Things That Block the Holy Spirit's Power

by J. LEE GRADY

*(Continued from page 24)*

ence for you. Have you, or someone you know, struggled to receive this supernatural infilling?

Here are some reasons why there might be a blockage:

- 1. Doubt or intellectual pride.** In the 1960s a journalist named John Sherrill decided to write a book discrediting the phenomenon of speaking in tongues. But after he interviewed countless people about this experience, his doubts were shattered and he was baptized in the Holy Spirit himself. His book, *They Speak With Other Tongues*, became a Christian classic. Spiritual experiences cannot be figured out with the mind. To receive the Spirit's infilling you must let go of your intellectual arguments and display childlike faith (see Matt. 18:2-4).
- 2. Religious tradition.** I knew an Episcopal priest who was filled with the Holy Spirit in the 1970s in New York City. He was excited about the new vitality he felt in his faith—and thrilled that his wife had experienced a physical healing. But when he shared his testimony with his bishop, he was told he was crazy! And the bishop referred him to a psychiatrist! Religious people who are locked into "the way we've always done it" find it hard to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit. You must be willing to break free from tradition.
- 3. Fear of the supernatural.** Some Christians grew up in denominations that taught against the infilling of the Holy Spirit. They were told that Pentecostals are all fanatics who go into trances, speak mindless gibberish and swing from chandeliers. Actually, the first disciples in the New Testament spoke in tongues and experienced miracles—yet their faith was not strange. It should be the norm! People who are afraid of God's supernatural power will struggle to receive it.
- 4. Unconfessed sin.** The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit can be "quenched" as well as "grieved" (1 Thess. 5:19; Eph. 4:30). Because He is so holy, our sinful habits and attitudes can cause Him to withdraw. This is why it's so important for us to walk in constant communion with God, and to be willing to repent quickly when we know we have sinned. Some people "stuff" their secret sins in the closets of their hearts. If you want to be filled with the Spirit, you must be willing to open those closets and invite the light of God's holiness into every dark corner of your life.
- 5. Emotional wounds.** Like the young man I prayed for last weekend, some people are just too burdened with emotional baggage to be filled with the Spirit. Some have been abused, others weighted down by anxiety, others grieved or depressed. They need healing first. Like Lazarus on the day he was raised from the dead, they are bound by the grave clothes of the past, and they need to be unwrapped before they can experience God's full anointing (see John 11:44). Healing is often needed before a person can receive the blessing of Holy Spirit baptism.
- 6. An unyielded spirit.** You cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit if you are full of yourself. Some

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## 6 Things That Block the Holy Spirit's Power

by J. LEE GRADY

*(Continued from page 25)*

people are too willful. They have not surrendered their plans, finances, relationships or time to God. They have their lives planned out and they don't want God interrupting their agendas. Yet God is looking to fill hearts that have been emptied and surrendered. Only the fully yielded can experience the fullness of His power.

If you have not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or if the flow of the Spirit has been blocked in your life, empty your heart today and prepare for your own personal Pentecost.

J. Lee Grady is the former editor of Charisma. You can follow him on Twitter @leegrady. He is the author of *10 Lies Men Believe* and other books. You can learn more about his ministry, The Mordecai Project, at [themordecainproject.org](http://themordecainproject.org).

\*works cited: <http://www.charismamag.com/blogs/fire-in-my-bones/23366-6-things-that-block-the-holy-spirit-s-power>  
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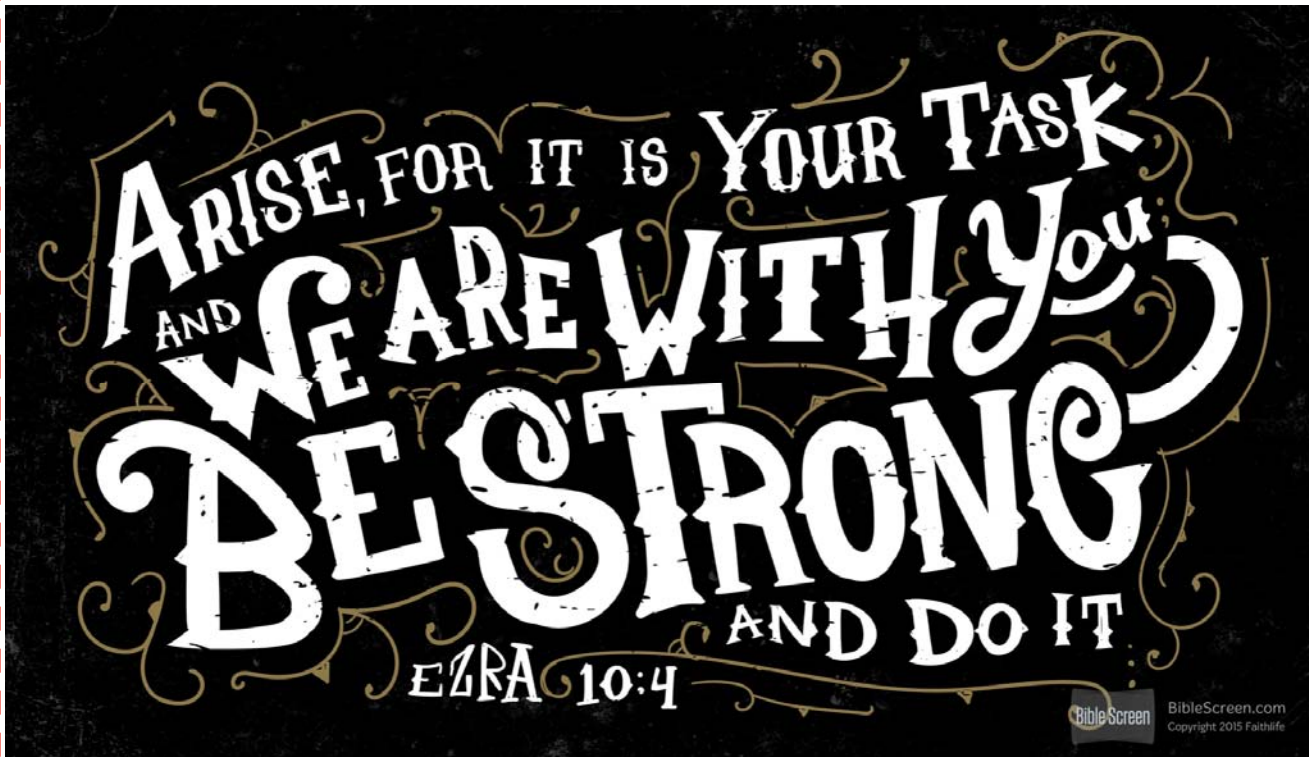


## Encouragement

Ministry can be hard and has it's ups and downs with many great rewards.

Sometime we just need to know we are not alone...confirm and encourage one another!

You're doing what you're supposed to do! We are with you! Be strong and do it!



## “Rewrite Holy Writ”

April 23, 2015

*As we have said before, so now I say again: if anyone is preaching to you a Gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. Galatians 1:9-10*

For five years, Frank Bruni was the chief restaurant critic for the *New York Times*. Since I wasn't eating a lot in New York City, I never read his reviews. Apparently, Bruni did a good job as a critic. I say that because, in 2011, he was promoted to be the fellow in charge of the prestigious Opinions and Editorials page of the *Times*.

To be honest, I still didn't read what Bruni was writing because I wasn't especially interested in the causes he was espousing.

That all changed when Bruni's recent column told the world it was time to rewrite the Bible.

Yup. That's what he said. The Bible should be rewritten so it might be more accepting of the gay and lesbian community. There were a number of reasons that forced Bruni to this conclusion.

1. The Bible is based on "ancient texts" founded on the "biases and blind spots of their authors, cultures, and eras." That, he says, keeps Christians stuck in ancient beliefs.
2. The Bible ignores and disregards humanity's advances in science and knowledge.

In contrast to the op-ed writings of Frank Bruni, I have the inspired thoughts of St. Paul. By the Holy Spirit's inspiration, Paul seems to have anticipated and responded to both of Bruni's logical points.

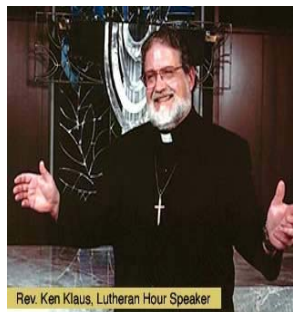
First, are Christians stuck in an ancient belief system? To that St. Paul would say, "You bet we are." Ours is an unchanging system based on the unchanging love of the Lord. Ours are beliefs which are the same yesterday, today and forever, because they tell of the salvation plan God put into effect to save humanity from the condemnation of our sin.

Second, does the Bible ignore humanity's advances? Not at all. We rejoice that the Lord has given wisdom to brilliant men and women. But when humankind tries to usurp the Lord's position of leadership, when they wish to rewrite the Word to make it more accepting of whatever sin might happen to be in vogue at the time, then Christians just say, "We don't think so."

That opinion is expressed beautifully by Paul who says we aren't trying to please men; we are dedicated to serving the Savior who gave Himself to destroy the penalty of sin -- not pretend sin doesn't exist.

Now I most certainly wish Frank Bruni well. On the other hand, I say to him and all who agree with him that now and forever we Christians "must obey God rather than men" (see Acts 5:29).

**THE PRAYER:** Dear Lord, we live in a world where sinners are very outspoken in their challenges against You. In so doing they show how clearly their thoughts are not Yours, and their ways are not Yours. May the world see the Savior's sacrifice and realize He alone is life, light and salvation. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Pastor Ken Klaus  
Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour<sup>®</sup>  
Lutheran Hour Ministries

Rev. Ken Klaus, Lutheran Hour Speaker

# The "Back Page"

## The Will of the People

In recent years we have seen many laws and referendums passed that have changed the way society views sex, marriage and sanctity of life.

We are told it is the 'will of the people' and changes must be made. We are told that old archaic views must be changed to fall in line with the will of the people. We are being told that the Church and the Bible need to change to fall in line with the will of the people.

The will of the people in the beginning was that Adam and Eve wanted to be like God so they ate the forbidden fruit. You know how that worked out, eviction from the Garden of Eden, man must work, woman will have pain in childbirth, all humans have a death penalty. The will if the people caused Joseph's brothers to throw him in a pit, sell him to slave traders, tell their father that he was dead. The will of the people left alone in the desert while Moses was on the mountain top, made a golden idol to worship because they thought Moses wasn't coming back. The will of the people in the desert said we can't go into the promised land, the people there are giants, so God let them wander in the desert for 40 years. Their offspring entered the promised land. The will of the people in the promised land said they needed an earthly king to lead them instead of just God, enter Saul, David, Solomon and a slew of other

kings, most worst than the last. The will of the people said "Crucify Him, Crucify Him, so Jesus went to the cross to die a criminals death.

The will of the people hasn't done so well over the past 4000 years or so. The will of the people in most cases is against God's will.

So how has God reacted to the will of the people? Has he struck them down with fire and brimstone as he did Sodom and Gomorra?

In the case of Adam and Eve, he promised and then sent a Savior for the entire world in the person of His Son, Jesus the Christ. In the case of Joseph, he allowed Joseph to become the 2nd most powerful man in Egypt and allowed him to save most of the world from starvation including his brothers. In the case of the Israelites in the desert, he provided food, water and caused their clothes and sandals to not wear out until they returned to the promised land. In the case of the Israelites wanting an earthly king, he provided men but as they were of the world they fell short of

God's expectations and their subjects, Saul, David and Solomon all started well but their human side caused them to stumble and sin.

19 kings for Israel and 19 kings for Judah followed, mostly bad and all of Israel and Judah ended up in captivity. Still the savior awaited them. The Jews of Jerusalem caused Jesus to be crucified and instead of sending them straight to hell, God gave them salvation through Jesus. Not just them but the entire world, then and now.



Steve & Teddy 9/28/1951

The will of the people in many cases is lead by the evil one, the devil. The devil tells us that what we want is important no matter what the consequences. In the 60's the phrase "If it feels good, do it" was popular and it is even more so today.

"Fear the LORD, and serve him with integrity and faithfulness...and serve only the LORD. But if you don't want to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. ..my family and I will still serve the LORD." Joshua 24:14-15

He warned us that there would be days like these...get busy  
*Pastor Steve*

### From the Editor

Thanks for all of your contributions. Remember, for this magazine to be a success you must be the reporters and the photographers. I will try and put it together in the best light and we will all praise God in the process.



Is he done yet?

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