



### The Truths We Share

"What draws people to be friends is that they see the same truth. They share it." ..CS Lewis

In today's society where pretty faces, prominent social standings and all way of influences are so greatly admired, honesty is the reset that invites us to take a second look at just how small we truly are. It matters little as to whether you are a hero or a zero during our short time here in this reality, because you exist only for the sole purpose of being loved by God. That is truth.

Honesty is also the truth that binds agreements. It is within the faith that two people have in each other as they share their pasts and futures together in marriage, or It is the foundation for the trust between two parties in contract with each another. It shows in the face of a true believer who will share with others what Christ did for us, regardless of what he is called by others for doing so. Such caring and honest attempt builds a strong character and a heart for Christ. Both yield the far better reflection of what people could become when God's Holy

Spirit of Truth resides within them.

For those who have either avoided or have never dealt with the truth that the Holy Spirit "hounds" [Martin Luther - The Hound of Heaven} them with have led many to a lifelong unhappiness and will remain so until they yield to God's love for them. Like fallen runners, Father will pick them up if only they would choose to believe it, and your heart goes out to them but until they surrender their will to the One who loves truth and honesty, they will stay upon that winding trail of many disappointments.

Honesty is even respected by the skeptical observer when presented with God's Plan of Salvation, as the latest polling indicates that most have already pre-judged you as being a typical judgmental and uber-overbearing insensitive stuck in a faith that will not change with the times he relates to. If you are the kind of Christian that no one wants to meet, you confirm that, but if you are the kind of Christian who is forthright in your way and example, they may reject the message, but they will not forget the meeting.

There is hope through honesty and it is the better ground that we hold as we stick to our beliefs and defend the truth within.

" I am not bound to win, but I am bound to live up to what light I have" .. Abraham Lincoln"

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." I Jn 3:18

**Faith & Family *Connect* – A Ministry of Victory Baptist Church**

Mike Ennis – Senior Pastor

Morris Starkey - Editor

## Holiday Issue December 2020 – January 2021

### Why Do Missions Have The Lowest Funding?

By Rik Charbonneau

*"If the Great Commission is true, our plans are not too big; they are too small."*

Pat Morley, Author - "The Christian Man"

As October 2020 rolls in with double the rate of COVID-19 test positives, I am sure that we are even more thankful for those who serve and care for others worldwide.

To acknowledge and praise special people is one thing, but financially supporting them is quite another thing, as has been the case with Christians financially supporting the global servants of Christ: our foreign Missionaries.

Although 70% of USA Christians voice opinions that the work of the Great Commission should be the foremost focus of the Church, only 30%\* donate anything at all to Missions. Historically, Missions has been the least funded of all of the Christian causes, and I attempt to explain that here:

During these turbulent economic times of late, total Christian annual income figures have been all over the map, but we will use \$12.3 trillion. (some have it as high as \$42 trillion of total USA population.)

Total projected Christian annual income - \$12.3 trillion\*\*

Amount given to Charitable causes - \$103 billion (2.58% of annual income) (25% of Christians do not donate to Christian causes, including to their own church)

Amount given to Missions - \$11.3 billion (just 2% of total donations to Christian causes)

Of the amount given to Missions: 87% is committed to global "evangelized" areas and 12% is committed to global "unreached" areas. (For Example - The .05% portion of a 50K income that is steered to support Missions to the "unreached" areas amounts to a total of \$28.50,

which is considerably far less in proportion to our donations given all other Christian causes.) That having been said, one has to ask why are we giving so little to Missions, especially to those in the "unreached" areas (38 countries). Have we historically lost our focus in supporting the work of the Great Commission? I think we have lost far more than that and it negatively effects our willingness to support Missions. Here is the most recent statistics\*\*\* on the level of participation of all USA Christians in the work of the Great Commission:

1. Ninety-five percent of all USA Christians have never won a soul to Christ. (They also spend 97% of their annual income on themselves/family.)

2. Eighty-percent of all USA Christians do not consistently witness for Christ. (That is an astounding loss of personal witness in people's daily conversation compared to that of 1945-1960.)

3. Seventy-percent of all USA Christians do not give toward the financing of the Great Commission.

4. Less than two-percent of all Christians are involved in the ministry of evangelism.

With those numbers, it is plain to see that we "average" Christians have placed such a small value upon the value of the work of the Great Commission, and that do we simply do not have it in their hearts to do what Jesus asked us to do: *"..Go [you] into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone."* Mark 16:15

It therefore follows we are giving only minimal amounts of financial support to Missions.

These dedicated global servants of Christ deserve to be funded at a level more worthy of the Great Commission, and we all need to reconnect to our Christian duty and then do so.

Thank you. (Via FreeShare)

Sources: \*thetravelingteam.org/stats/missions \*\*World Christian Database, 2015 \*\*\*Bible.org/illustration/evangelism-statistics

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## Holiday Issue December 2020 – January 2021

### Skeletons In The Closet

Internet Browser Histories:  
The Modern Day Closet of Personal Skeletons



"Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death."  
James 1:15 ESV

In an age now past, a "skeleton in the closet" was a phrase that best described family secrets, or a part of our own personal past that we all hoped would never be brought into the light of another's knowledge. As a rule back then, a little dirty laundry here and there in a person's life would normally just be winked at, but if any social taboo had been committed, one's life could be easily be ruined if such conduct were made known.

George Bernard Shaw once wrote of these secrets: "If you can't get rid of the skeleton in your closet, you'd best teach it to dance." In light of our current age of the internet, he was very apt in having saying that.

With our seemingly unrestricted access to questionable information and materials on the internet, the phrase "a skeleton in the closet" now covers a far greater amount of personal improprieties. With more people having more access to things that were inaccessible before, combined with the myriad of immoral activities that are available, a large number of people are becoming addicted to such things as pornography or other immoral practices. When the symptoms of these internet driven addictions or other improper conduct finally comes to the attention of the person's loved ones, it is usually serious money problems that first indicate that things are amiss. It is at this point that the true "skeleton in the closet" is usually opened and looked at by family members: the web browser history of the person needing help. If such a person happens to become deceased, it is common family practice now to

hire a "cleaner" who will examine all the deceased person's activity on the internet to determine the "where, when and how" of the situation and then destroy all electronic records of any unacceptable conduct, contacts or purchases involved.

The rates of recovery from such addiction are not good, and while personal web browser histories may be the new closet for the "skeletons of our of misconduct on the internet", love is still stronger than addiction and many a family has stood firmly with their loved ones needing help in accepting, containing and then defeating such problems.



### Driving Our Car

Cars are a means of transport – they are wheeled vehicles propelled by the use of a motor.



Our spiritual life is like a car and, when we first believe in Jesus Christ, we receive one as a birthday present. God supplies unlimited power to our car's super-engine. If we wish to go places in our car (spiritual life) we must first get in (1 John 1:9), turn on the ignition (faith) and place our foot on the pedals (personal motivation and drive). The steering wheel is our volition and it is up to us in which direction we head. However, God does not leave us to drive around aimlessly – there's a map in the glove box to direct us (Bible), but we must read it to be of any use. We also have a radio (a still, small voice); if we listen, we'll get regular traffic reports and know which roads to avoid. God has designed a uniquely individual spiritual life for each of us. It saddens Him when we leave our spiritual-car in the shed and choose to walk (doing everything by our own energy) or worse, go hitching for a lift (relying on the power of others). ( ViaFreeShare)

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### A Flawed Piece Of Clay

by Henry Jaegers

And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. (Jeremiah 18:4-6



Several years ago, I wrote a commentary on the book of Jeremiah. But for some reason, the message that I am sharing with you now had escaped me then. At that time, I never fully understood its application. But this morning as I was beginning to work on another project, the thought came to me that I was 83 years old, have been in the ministry for over 60 years, and the thought came to my mind, what have you done over these years that would bring glory to God? I was silent. (Something rare indeed.)

Then the thought came to me about this message. It was like God opened my eyes to help me see something I never fully understood before. What can God do with this corrupted piece of clay that I have given to him over the years, and believe me, it was flawed indeed. Aren't you glad that God thinks higher things about us than we often think of ourselves? I often referred to Jeremiah 29:11 and reflect on these words that say: "I know the thoughts that I think of you saith the Lord; thoughts of peace and not of evil to bring you to an expected end." "An expected end"! As I see it, God gives us a promise, he stands behind that promise and brings to pass what we through faith have anticipated.

Then I think of that little song that means so much to me. I don't know who wrote it but I never forgot about it.

*He's still working on me,  
To make me what I ought to be.  
It took him just a week to make the moon and stars  
The earth and the moon and Jupiter and Mars.  
How loving and patient He must be,  
Cause, he's still working on me.*

I can't help getting a little emotional when I think of that song. I find myself singing it very often when I think of this flawed piece of clay that I have to offer him.

But consider just for a moment the context of all of this. Here is the potter doing what he does; making vessels from clay. And sometimes he gets a piece of clay that is not perfect and it doesn't suit the original plan that he had for it. So, instead of throwing it away, he just takes that flawed piece of clay and makes another vessel and is somehow satisfied with the outcome.

(See "Clay" Page 8)

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### “Apathy” Our Quiet Enemy For Generations

"..the love of many will grow cold," Matthew 24:12

Upon reading Jennifer Woodley's Devotional, "The Light of the World" - 9/24/20, I looked into the generational growth of apathy that has been stripping away the faith of the Christian majority.

Going back in time from the present, I found a quote from each of the Grahams: Billy and Franklin on the topic of revival, which we certainly need now to properly put apathy off the rails and our service to God back on track.

"The church holds the key to revival. It is within our grasp. The church holds the key to revival. It is within our grasp. Will we rise to the challenge?"

Billy Graham, 1964

"No one can solve the spiritual darkness besetting America ...only God can."... Franklin Graham, 9/19/2020

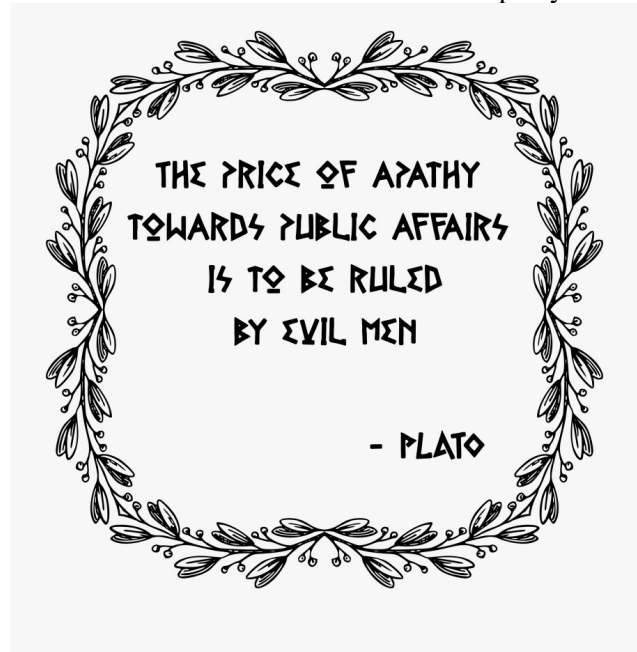
And there are other people of recent note who agree with Franklin Graham when he very recently offered this statement:

"For many in the church today, they're comfortable and a lot of our pastors don't want to rock the boat. Many will not speak out on hot-button social issues, insisting such topics are "political" when they are moral matters where churches must be bold... they have ignored such sin and the responsibility to speak against it" .. Franklin Graham, (09/03/2020, CP Church & Ministries Interview)

So how did we fall so far? It follows America's level of morality through the years, In looking at the statistics for America during the 60-years that has elapsed between the rather confident statement of Billy Graham and the less than positive statement by his son Franklin, it can be seen that the level of morality in America slipped away at the rate of 1% per year.

Although the church may well have become too excessive in accepting and supporting the wholesale migration into immoral lifestyles in demanding more individual accountability, there is one particular

aspect within the church that has an over-arching driver of our nation's moral decline: our apathy.



Apathy within the church has become the most destructive obstacle to the role of the church to speak out against violence, even more so than atheism "Apathetic views on spirituality are a greater threat to religious belief than atheism," .. J. Warner Wallace, Professor of Christian Apologetics, Biola University

If I may put the statement just made into perspective as it pertains to the generational increase in apathy for the USA, the last generation in America credited as having the

same level of moral conviction as the previous generation had was the Silent Generation (Born 1925-1945, 51% attended church weekly\*) that followed the GI Generation (Born in 1924 or earlier, 51% attended church weekly\*).

The Baby Boomers Generation (Born in 1924 or earlier, 38% attended church weekly\*) that followed were about 1/3 less religious than both the preceding generations. The national decline in the nation's level of morality has been about 1% per year for the past 40 years.

(See Apathy Page 8)

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### God Wants You To Be Saved



#### God Loves You

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16*

*Greater love has no [one] than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13*

**2) We have all sinned. God is Holy and Perfectly Just. He cannot ignore our sins or sweep them under the rug. All of us have lied, stolen, cheated, been selfish, lusted, coveted and much more numerous times.**

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. Romans 3:10*

*Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins. Ecc 7:20*

**3) Sin leads to death and punishment.**

*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23*

*And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous (those who believe) into eternal life." Matt 25:46*

**4) In mercy and grace God paid for our sins in full to save us from the penalty of sin. He offers the free gift of forgiveness, righteousness and salvation to all who believe.**

*She will give birth to a son, and you shall give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins. Matt 1:21*

*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might*

*be saved through him. John 3:17*

*but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8*

*He was delivered over to death for our trespasses (sins) and was raised to life for our justification Rom 4:25.*

*For at just the right time, while we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Rom 5:6*

**5) Jesus came to proclaim the Gospel (Good News) that the sins of all who believe are forgiven in him. He did not come to count or hold our sins against us.**

*...in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses (sins) against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 2 Cor 5:19*

*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. John 1:12*

*However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. Rom 4:5*

**6) All May Be Saved Now**

*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Romans 10:13*

*And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' Acts 2:21*

*...but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John 20:31*

*"Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law...Acts 13:38-39*

*If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Rom 10:9*

*7) This is God's promise to those who believe, trust in Jesus.*

*"I will forgive their iniquity, I will remember their sin no more. Jer 31:34b*

**8) Accept Jesus Now.**

*You are a sinner in need of a Savior. Believe that the Jesus died for my sins on the cross and was raised for your justification. Turn from my sin and self righteousness. Receive, trust and confess Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior. Seek to know Him better through His word. Let His will be done in your life.*

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### No Reserves, No Retreats, No Regrets

by Ken Barnes

“Do not quench the Spirit.” I Thess 5:19

William Whiting Bordon, after he graduated from high school in 1904, was called to be a missionary. At different points in Bordon's short life, he wrote in the back of his Bible, no reserves, no retreats, no regrets.



Though he came from a very wealthy family, wealth did not possess him. Early on in his life, a friend expressed that he was throwing his life away by becoming a missionary—he wrote in his Bible, no reserves. After he graduated from Yale, he was offered very lucrative positions—he penned, no retreats. His missionary call narrowed to a Muslim group in China. After doing graduate work at Princeton Seminary, he left for Egypt to study Arabic before arriving in China. In Egypt, he contracted spinal meningitis and within a month was dead at age twenty-five. Before his death, under the other two notations he had made in his Bible, he wrote—no regrets.

Was William Borden's seemingly untimely death a waste of human life? Absolutely not.

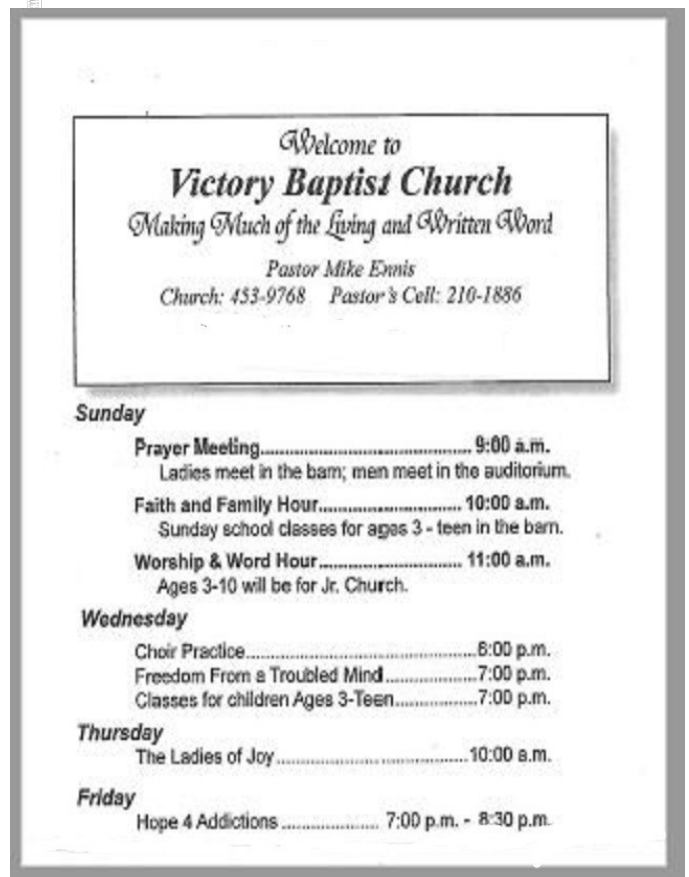
Thousands of people have read his story and have been encouraged in their missionary call. God never wastes any of our sorrows.

Things happen to Christians. We experience what we don't expect, and some expectations don't come to fruition. The Christian life often entails disappointments that we can't understand, but God knows and cares.

Church history is littered with people who have done great things for God yet had become sullen and cynical at the end of their lives. Things happened to them that may have seemed unfair or unjust. We, like William Borden, at the end of our journey, need to be able to say, no reserves, no retreats, no regrets.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Whiting\\_Borden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Whiting_Borden)

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Welcome to  
**Victory Baptist Church**  
*Making Much of the Living and Written Word*  
Pastor Mike Ennis  
Church: 453-9768 Pastor's Cell: 210-1886

**Sunday**  
Prayer Meeting..... 9:00 a.m.  
Ladies meet in the barn; men meet in the auditorium.  
Faith and Family Hour..... 10:00 a.m.  
Sunday school classes for ages 3 - teen in the barn.  
Worship & Word Hour..... 11:00 a.m.  
Ages 3-10 will be for Jr. Church.

**Wednesday**  
Choir Practice..... 8:00 p.m.  
Freedom From a Troubled Mind..... 7:00 p.m.  
Classes for children Ages 3-Teen..... 7:00 p.m.

**Thursday**  
The Ladies of Joy..... 10:00 a.m.

**Friday**  
Hope 4 Addictions..... 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

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### “Clay” from Page 4)

This is both a message of prophecy and looking back since that prophecy was made, it has become part of the history of Israel. It was spoken in the context of Israel being a flawed vessel in his hand, but He has not given up on them. Before them lies Babylonian captivity and that will be part of his purposes in remolding this flawed vessel. But the day came when they left Babylon. It was reluctantly. They had settled down after 70 years and became quite comfortable being in the enemy's territory. God had to use a heathen king to motivate them through threats of punishment to get them to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple.

The book of Ezra and Nehemiah gives us history. The marred clay has come to an expected end. But the good news is, although the enemies of God have sought to destroy her, and unfortunately for Israel, their eyes are still closed to the blessing of God.

I have given you the context of the verse and the application is very real. If you are having one of those bouts of self-deprecation, take heart. Regardless of how you think about yourself when you face all your failures, we are in the hands of a loving God who has an expected end for us. May his name be praised as we think of his great love.

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### (Apathy from page 5)

And you can see that same rate in the increase in atheism from the Boomers forward: 26% of Baby Boomers, 30% of Generation X (born 1965 - 1980), 30% of Millennials (born 1981-1996) and 35% of Generation Z (born 1999 - 2015).

Apathy within the church is cumulative and has increased with every generation since the 1960s, as you can clearly see above, and maybe we are so apathetic that we are not capable nor interested in bringing about a revival.

Also with each generation, almost in lock step with the increase in apathy, there has also been another prime driver to the decrease in the number of Christian families within each of those generations: the lack of a father in the home.

“Across faith practices, the number one factor that would shape why a young person stays in the faith and/or leaves on the reverse, is a warm relationship with the father,”.. Vern Bengtson, 2013 Study

With fewer Christian parents in America every year, and with fewer and fewer fathers in the home at the same time, the chances for raising another generation to be more Christian than the previous generation are very small.

Tie that to the effects of apathy within the church and we have a social situation where no one calls out for social accountability, in the home or society. One revival could turn these two major trends around, but as long as apathy rules the day, the church will continue loosening its grasp on being the key to revival and to a change in the course of our country.

Let us pray to the Lord for a revival in America and throughout the globe.

“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer.” 1 Peter 3:12  
\* PEW Research, Religious Landscape Study, 2014  
(by Rik Charbonneaux Via Free-share)

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