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Confess your sins in time for the Day of Atonement at Jewish eScapegoat website

The whimsical site created to bring awareness during the Jewish holiday season is being taken seriously by some. Page 11

# The Stained Glass Theatre

## Community Theatre with a family message in Ozark, MO

BY STEVE HIGHLANDER - RNR MANAGING EDITOR

OZARK, MO - For over 30 years the Stained Glass Theatre (SGT), located in Ozark, MO, has been sharing the Gospel message with live drama and music. The theater, now entering their 31st season, opened in 1983 in the basement of what used to be the Springfield Family Restaurant in Springfield, MO. In 2003 the theater moved to Ozark where it has been wowing audiences ever since.

The SGT was founded by Ron Boutwell , who still serves as Executive Director Emeritus. He is joined by Tom Young, Executive Director, Steve Jenkins, Administrative Director and Bobby Caringer, Technical Director, in the management of the theatre and its performances.

The SGT is somewhat unique in the community performing arts arena. Most of the plays have been written and performed by local writers and volunteer cast members.

Mr. Boutwell has written over 40 of the productions. His students at Southwest Baptist University contributed others. Joseph Ransom also writes. He specializes in plays about historical characters or events. Steve Jenkins has written some plays and others have been written by former cast or production volunteers.

Another unique aspect of the SGT is their aggressive schedule. Their season runs September through August for 36 weeks per year. They usually run 7 productions per season. Most productions run three times a week for 5 weeks. They also include a six-week Christmas show for a total of 108 performances per season. To date the theater boasts an impressive record of 168 productions over their 30 year history.

Still another unique part of the SGT is their message. The Theatre sees itself as a ministry first and foremost. The



The cast on the set of *The Riverboat Revival*, the last production of the 2012-2013 season at the Stained Glass Theatre in Ozark, MO. The Stained Glass Theatre features family-oriented Christian plays, many with a historical background. The opening production of the 2013-2014 season is *Family Outings* by nationally known playwright, Paul McCusker, of Focus on the Family Radio Theatre. Photo courtesy The Stained Glass Theatre

Theatre's mission is "Serving Christ through the Arts." Every play is Christian at heart. This makes a significant difference to everyone involved, including the staff, crew and cast, and to those who come to watch the performances. According to Steve Jenkins, "I was involved in community theatre for 40 years until, one day I considered the next production and said 'I don't want to be seen in the audience of this show, let alone on stage.' Then God led me to Stained Glass Theatre where He gave me the desires of my heart."

The ministry's motto is: "Stained Glass Theatre strives to be a jewel among theaters,

a place where God the Father is glorified and Jesus Christ is proclaimed as Lord and Savior. Our goal is to be an outreach arm of the church where patrons can feel safe bringing the unsaved and un-churched friends and loved ones who they could not get to go to church."

Operating an aggressive community theatre has its moments, but according to Executive Director, Tom Young, "While there are struggles, there are also rich rewards. We always make ourselves available to pray with any patron who wants it. I've seen people accept Christ as Savior after

a show. I've prayed for failing marriages in our chapel. I've seen actors praying for patrons who have just suffered the loss of a loved one. You see, when the show is over, our work has just begun. We are not about just giving a great performance; we're all about ministering to our patrons. We want them to leave better than they were when they walked in the door. Yes, there are struggles, but the victories far outweigh the difficulties."

The cast and crew are also often impacted by their work with the SGT. Edda Prater (who plays Charlie Bailey in

See THEATRE on page 10

## Real White House Butler inspires new movie

### Eugene Allen known as a man of faith

By ADELLE M. BANKS

WASHINGTON (RNS) Eugene Allen served eight presidents as a White House butler, and his legendary career is the inspiration for "Lee Daniels' The Butler," a film starring Oprah Winfrey, Jane Fonda and a host of A-list Hollywood talent.

But members of The Greater First Baptist Church knew the man who died in 2010 by other titles: usher, trustee, and a humble man of quiet faith.

"The attributes that made him a great butler made him a great usher," said Denise Johnson, an usher at the predominantly black D.C. church where Allen was a member for six decades.

Those qualities were both external — black suits and white gloves — and internal — a dignified, soft-spoken manner.

On a recent Sunday, parishioners recalled Allen as

a peacemaker, someone who never raised his voice.

His devotion to service extended far beyond the public and private rooms of the White House to the doorways and kitchen of his church. In African-American churches, the usher is a special role bestowed on highly regarded members. Allen joined others to open doors to visitors and pass out fans and offering plates. He also would roll up his sleeves and help prepare fish and chicken at church fundraising dinners.

"He was not only a servant there," the Rev. Robert Hood, an associate minister, said of Allen's White House work. "But he was also a servant doing the work of the Lord."

The movie hit theaters on Friday (Aug. 16) with Allen portrayed as the fictional Cecil Gaines (Forest Whitaker),

See ALLEN on page 9

## Mystery priest at MO accident scene is hailed as an angel in disguise

By MELANIE EVERSLEY

c. 2013 USA Today (RNS) Emergency workers and others in eastern Missouri are not sure what to make of a mystery priest who showed up at a critical accident scene Sunday morning (Aug. 4) and whose prayer seemed to change life-threatening events for the positive.

Even odder, the black-garbed priest does not appear in any of the nearly 70 photos of the scene of the accident in which a 19-year-old girl almost died.

No one knows the priest, and he vanished without a word, said Raymond Reed, fire chief of New London, Mo.

"I think it's a miracle," Reed said. "I would say whether it was an angel that was sent to

us in the form of a priest or a priest that became our angel, I don't know. Either way, I'm good with it."

Carla Churchill Lentz, the mother of the teen who was critically injured, said emergency workers have told her there is no way her daughter should have lived inside such a mangled car.

"I do believe he certainly could have been an angel dressed in priest's attire because the Bible tells us there are angels among us," she said.

Katie Lentz, a sophomore at Tulane University, was driving from her parents' home in Quincy, Ill., to Jefferson City, Mo., where she has a summer internship and planned to attend church with friends.

See ANGEL on page 4

## Springfield ministry launches TV network on Internet, cable, satellite



Sarah Hord, host of Acts Television Network's (ATN) new program Our Heroes, interviews ex-Marine and Vietnam Veteran, Eddie Daffren about his experiences in Vietnam and since returning home. The show is one of several original programs being produced by ATN, including Branson Now with Branson Mabe of the Baldknobbers Jamboree and Music to My Ears, with legendary music producer Gary S. Paxton, Sr. RN-R Photo by Jackie Scott.

By JACKIE SCOTT

SPRINGFIELD/BRANSON, MO - Broadcasting worldwide, Acts Television Network (ATN) is as close as your computer, ipod, or phone. ATN is the newest member of the Acts Media Group which includes Acts Radio and Real News-Review newspaper, owned by Acts Ministry Inc. (not for profit), and managed exclusively by Good and Faithful Service Company (GF) (an affiliated for profit.) Check it out by going to [www.actsmediagroup.com](http://www.actsmediagroup.com). or [www.Ustream.TV/channel/acts-television-network](http://www.Ustream.TV/channel/acts-television-network).

ATN's purpose is to offer a wide range of programs covering

topics such as religion, education, entertainment, and social issues. Dr. James R. Wining, Bishop and Chief Administrative officer for Acts Ministry Inc. and president of GF, is responsible for all sales, marketing and operations of Acts Media Group.

Broadcasting from Branson, Missouri, it's not surprising that two of ATN's first original programs are about music.

Legendary singer, writer and music producer Gary S. Paxton, who is known for such diverse hits as *Monster Mash*, *Alley Oop*, and *He Was There All the Time*, gives details about his life and musical journey.

He wrote his first song at age

10 and had his first hit at the tender age of 14. Paxton found success early on in rock and roll and from there went on to Jazz, Country and Gospel. He has continued to churn out hit after hit, both for himself and for other artists he has produced.

Paxton will also share how he came to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Watch *Music to My Ears with Gary S. Paxton* Mondays at 7 p.m. on ATN beginning September 9th.

Third generation Baldknobber and emcee of Branson's First Show, The Baldknobbers Jamboree, Brandon Mabe will team up with fellow Baldknobber Megan McComb for *Branson*.

See ACTS TV on page 9

ANNOUNCING ACTS TELEVISION NETWORK

Acts Ministry, Inc announces the launch of a new Christian TV network. Acts Television Network (ATN) is available now on the Internet. ATN will bring you some unique programming, including: Christian talk, teaching, Branson entertainment, and locally produced shows not found anywhere else. Scan the code to see some clips of the shows.

[www.actsmediagroup.com/tv](http://www.actsmediagroup.com/tv)

**BRANSON NOW**  
Thursdays 7:00 PM  
Premiering September 12th

Third generation Baldknobber, Brandon Mabe, emcee and vocalist will host a program featuring some of your favorite Branson Stars, talking about how Branson has become the Live show capitol of the world

**Music to My Ears**  
Mondays 7:00 PM  
Premiering September 9th

Starring Gary S. Paxton, Sr., Join a living legend and producer of such hits as *Monster Mash*, *Alley Oop*, and *He Was There all the time*, for a journey through his exciting career in Rock and Roll, Jazz, Country and Gospel music.

**Our Heroes**  
Tuesdays 7:00 PM  
Premiering September 10th

Veteran's share their stories, we highlight veteran's events and tackle issues of importance to veterans. Host, Sarah Hord is president of the veterans motorcycle non-profit group "Rolling Thunder."



# Commentary

## Faith and Culture: *Are we to be a ‘moral guide?’*

Recently I was invited to take part in an online discussion forum addressing the question: “Does the Church have a responsibility to be the moral guide of a nation?”

I am sharing a somewhat expanded version of my reply as this month’s Faith and Culture column. Please keep in mind there are no easy, cliché answers to such a complex moral, social and theological dilemma.

This is a relatively complicated question, because it encompasses several realms, including: faith, society, politics, human rights, and others.

Personally, I would not use the term “guide.” I would use the (more Biblical) term “witness.” The better questions is, “Does the Church have a responsibility to be a witness to a nation?” The answer to that

question is “YES!”

A witness shares the truth, as they understand it, about what they have seen and heard, regardless if anyone believes it or not. A witness isn’t required to make anyone believe him.

A guide implies that there is a need to follow, so the guide - to be successful - must see more and more people following. The tendency of the guide then, is to make people follow him.

I can’t find anywhere where Jesus made people follow him. He was straight with people, even seemingly harsh at times (let the dead bury their dead, but you follow me) but He compelled no one. The rich young ruler turned from Jesus and went away sorrowful. Jesus didn’t run after him, watering down the requirements until the guy accepted the call to fol-



**Steve Highlander**  
Managing Editor RN-R,

low.

I ended last month’s column with, what I believe to be an important statement, “My faith compels me to share it with others, it does not compel me to make others act like Christians.”

That said, I agree with many people who think that the church needs to get its act together because we have, in many cases, lost the power to speak prophetically to America and the world.

The Gospel needs to be dem-

onstrated, both in power to change lives and the power of a changed life to be effective - otherwise Christianity is simply an “alternative lifestyle” that someone can take or leave.

Jesus used the metaphor of salt and light to describe the impact His followers should have on the world.

While Jesus explained one side of the equation: failure to impact the world positively by diluting the salt or hiding the light, there are two extremes. The other one being to much of either salt or light.

We’ve all had over-salted food. It ruined what could have been a pleasant meal. Not only was the taste unpleasant, but sometimes it is inedible. Over-salted Christianity is no different. It is unpleasant and hard to swallow for people in the world.

Likewise, too harsh of a light can blind people so they can’t see what you want them too see. The glare of blinding light actually hinders vision. No one can look at the sun, but anyone can look steadfastly at the moon. The reflected light is both useful and beautiful. The Church needs to reflect the light of God on the earth.

Salt and light must be used in the right measurement to be effective. The church must balance her message with love on one side and a practical righteousness on the other to be an effective witness to the nation.

*Dr. Steve Highlander is a pastor, author and speaker. He holds a doctorate in Pastoral Theology and is a Certified Christian Counselor. He can be contacted through his website at [www.c3ministries.com](http://www.c3ministries.com).*

## Upstairs Over a Vacant Lot: *Actions can be a result of a world view*

There are many references to “a worldview” in an effort to identify the paradigm used by news media, politicians, professors, scientists, and sociologists --- just to name a few of the interest groups in America. The church should not be left off the list. There are about as many worldviews as there are denominations. To be even more accurate, some church groups do not espouse any worldview. They are strictly parochial in their outlook and their actions.

For now, my efforts in this column will focus on descriptively delineating the evidence that Acts Ministry, Inc.

International, Inc. have a worldview.

Acts Ministry, Inc. was formed in 1993 as a corporation dedicated to fostering and implementing understanding between various theological, doctrinal, and historical differences in the church (church, in this instance, refers to denominational and non-denominational groups). Our worldview gave recognition to what we considered a genuine need for the church to contribute something meaningful to the world at large. Thus began a journey to accomplish something organizationally to accomplish the task we assigned to ourselves.

Early in the history of Acts Ministry (the non-profit corporation), we began the process of providing credible ministerial credentials to certain individuals. We followed this plan to more inclusiveness by making provision for other non-profit religious corporations to be in association with Acts Ministry.

Very soon, other programs fell into place. Prayer, we believe, is the foundation of all the programs. The Acts

Ministry International Prayer Circles were created to meet this need and the program continues to this day. There is an online educational effort, book publishing, an Internet



**Dr. Paul C. Collins**  
Publisher RN-R

radio station, television via Internet, and, of course,

The Real News-Review Newspaper.

Acts Ministry Church International was incorporated July, 2013. Just as Acts Ministry, Inc., the church is organized to function within a framework comprised of people with a worldview. Although it is ultimately responsible to a corporate board, the Council of Bishops give spiritual oversight to the clergy and church programs.

Anyone wanting more detailed information about the non-profit corporation or the church, I invite you to contact me personally through my email address [drpaulcollins@sbcglobal.net](mailto:drpaulcollins@sbcglobal.net). Or, you can go to the Acts Ministry,

Inc. website at [www.actsministry.org](http://www.actsministry.org). However, for details, I recommend you contact me directly. I will respond as quickly as possible.

How does Acts Ministry view the world? I will be writing regarding that question in the months to come as I return to the usual approaches to content in my regular column.

*Dr. Paul Collins is the founder and VP of Operations of Acts Ministry, Inc and Publisher of the Real News - Review. He is an ordained Methodist Minister, Presiding Bishop of Acts Church International and currently serves as senior pastor of Acts Church in Springfield, MO.*

***Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.***

**~ George Washington**

## Mind and Spirit: *The principle of the backwards train*

Traditional Psychology says that when there is a dysfunction in our emotions, we should find the source and expose it so you can learn to live around it instead of living in denial about it. Many times our upbringing can be the source of our discomfort, or a traumatic event in my life, so exposing and walking through the emotions of it is supposed to help us move on from the pain of it.

Behavioral Psychology takes another tack and says that behavior is more important than emotion. If you reward/reinforce good behavior, and punish/ignore bad behavior, then people will change their behavior and their emotions will follow suit.

Strangely enough, Behavioral Psychology is closer to the scriptural prescription than is Traditional Psychology. While Christ was concerned with motivation (“he who lusts after a woman has committed adultery with her in his heart”...), it is also true that we will finally be judged for our actions. The New Testament expects us to behave in accordance with the change that has been wrought within us when we accepted Christ, whether we feel like it



**Dr. Brooke Highlander**  
Associate Editor, RN-R

or not, and it is this act of faith that moves our emotions into line with our choices.

As an illustration, when I was a teenager, I was a committed Christian who wanted to serve God, and felt called to the ministry, but I was full of hatred towards a certain person, which produced a tremendous amount of guilt and pain. I wanted to learn how to love him, but did not know how. I confided this to a trusted adult and they told me a story about a train, which has never left me. She said that our emotions are like the caboose of a train, and our choices are the engine. If we choose to act a certain way consistently, our emotions are sure to follow. She suggested that I treat this person as if I liked him. This was abhorrent to me, because I could not

stand to be in his vicinity; I did it, because I wanted God more than my anger. I thought, “If I liked him, what would I do for him, how would I speak to him, and how would I relate to him” and acted accordingly. At first, it was extremely difficult, but every act of kindness towards him melted my heart. Soon I felt love for him. I still did not like all of his behaviors, but I was able to see him as a person with all the good and bad aspects that go along with that. I could forgive him and pray for him.

This lesson has followed me for the rest of my life. Yes, there have been times that I have met or worked with those who have mistreated me or who just rub me the wrong way. I have learned that my behavior (in line with the Spirit of Christ who dwells within me) drastically alters my emotional response to that person and releases God to work first in my life, and sometimes even in the life of the other person.

*Brooke Highlander is Associate Editor of the Real News - Review. She is an ordained minister, an applied psychologist, and a certified Christian counselor.*

## A One Minute Devotional: *Someone who is always there by Nancy Collins*

I was thinking about a really simple man. He was simple in his wardrobe, his manner, where he grew up, and the work he did. He was quiet and unassuming. He did not stand out in a crowd. In other words, he was not an outstanding person in any sense of the word; but he had an impact on his neighborhood and the world. In fact, his life and what he did impacts ev-

ery person daily; he impresses those who know him.

Everyone wants someone in their life that they can confide in, someone that has that bit of advice, those words of encouragement, that voice over the phone, or their presence that brings comfort. This person can be counted on to be your friend no matter what you have done or not done or forgotten to do. They may not “know

things” (as I often say), but the same person will be there for you. This is what counts.

My friend is amazing. He forgives me. His name is Jesus. He is the true Christ. He is the Son of God.

*Nancy Collins and her Husband Dr. Paul Collins, co-founded Acts Ministry. She is recently retired from Maranatha Village in Springfield, MO.*

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### ACTS MINISTRY

International Headquarters  
Springfield, MO 65808  
USA  
Phone: 417-886-0223

**LeAnn Kennedy,**  
President & CEO  
**Dr. Paul Collins**  
Founder - Vice President  
**Dr. James (Jim) Wining**  
VP of Administration  
**Audrey West**  
Secretary / Treasurer  
**Dr. Paul Collins**  
Publisher  
**Dr. Steve Highlander**  
Managing Editor  
**Dr. Brooke Highlander**  
Associate Editor

### Advertising and

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We believe that we can report the news with accuracy even though we see events through our paradigm as Christians.

The stories and opinions expressed in **The Real News - Review** do not necessarily reflect the opinions and beliefs of Acts Ministry, Inc, its board or larger body of associates.

To suggest or submit a story or to write the editor contact Steve Highlander at [editor@actsmediagroup.com](mailto:editor@actsmediagroup.com).



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# Christian Economic Perspective

## The laws of the kingdom of heaven (part two)

Last month, I discussed two of the eight most significant laws of the heavenly realm Christians will inherit for eternity. This month, I want to continue that discussion and address three more laws governing the invisible world, those being the laws of perseverance, responsibility, and greatness.

The law of perseverance is stated most clearly in Matthew 7:7-11. In this passage, Jesus tells those listening to him to ask, seek, and knock, with the corresponding results of receiving, finding, and opening. He goes on to say that following these teachings will lead to universal results that apply equally to all. Jesus then concludes His teaching by stating that God, like men, give good gifts to those who ask Him.

The importance of the law of perseverance is paramount, for adhering to this law demonstrates faith, without which it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). In addition, persevering allows God to reward those who diligently seek Him.

The next law, the law of responsibility, is found in Jesus' teaching in Luke 12:48, where Jesus says, "... From everyone who has been given



Oliver Burrows , RN-R Economic Columnist

much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more." In this parable, found in Luke 12:35-48, Jesus addresses the need to those who believe to be watchful (verse 40), faithful and sensible (verse 42), and obedient (verse 43), with a reward for those who fulfill these three requirements (verse 44). He also warns of the consequences of slothfulness and disobedience (verses 45-48). In short, when believers know what the Master wants us to be doing, there is no excuse for failing to comply.

The fifth foundational law of the kingdom of heaven is the law of greatness, which is found in Matthew 18:3-4. Here, after calling a little child, Jesus says, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of

heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." He also addresses who will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven in Luke 22:25-26, where He says, "And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant." In these passages, Jesus shows that greatness in the kingdom of heaven is the result of child-likeness, with unquestioning trust and faith in God, and servanthood (being a servant leader).

Lord willing, next month I will address the final three laws of the kingdom of heaven, with a discussion of the laws of unity, miracles, and dominion.

Rev. Oliver K. Burrows III is an ordained minister with Acts Ministry. He hosts two Christian and one sports radio program in Wausau, Wisconsin and across the Internet. Oliver is available for speaking engagements on a wide variety of subjects and can be contacted via e-mail at [oliverburrows@economictruth.org](mailto:oliverburrows@economictruth.org).

## Let Life Happen

By Guest Columnist Lena Hughes

Someone once said, "Life is what happens to you while you are making other plans."

Life if always happening to me in spite of how hard I try to control it. Our family owns a theatre and a live music show in Branson, Missouri. As the CEO of our family business, I strive daily to make our business successful. I try to follow the principles of time managements, pondering on what needs to be done, making a list, and prioritizing my tasks. But with all my planning, life still gets in the way.

A while back I was telling my family how difficult it was to get things done at work. I said, "Someone is always interrupting my work to speak to me, to the point that it seems I can't get anything done!" A couple of days later, my daughter-in-law said, "Mom, may I schedule an interruption with you?" It made me sop and think about interruptions, are they okay?

I've learned that letting go of the thought that there is only one way that things should work out, and only one result

that will make us happy frees us to go with the twists and turns that are sure to happen in life. To go with the "flow of life" frees us from the pressure of trying to control things which are beyond our control.

For sure, we should make our plans and work towards what we want, but to greatly increase our chances of being happy and satisfied, we need to let go of the outcome. We need to let life happen!

As a Christian, I take great care to study God's word, pray, live the commandments, attend church services, and serve others. I try to be an example to my family, friends, and business associates. But try as I might, I find life is buffeting me around, making much that surrounds me imperfect, including myself. If we're trying to be good Christians, why doesn't God always come to our rescue?

The fact is that God doesn't micromanage our lives. Does He care about the sparrow? Yes! He cares about everything that happens to us, yet He sometimes lets difficult things hap-

pen to us so that we can go through the refiner's fire, go through a wilderness period in our lives, if you will. And thus by experience we grow.

When we try to hold on to how we think things should be, it is a sure recipe for dissatisfaction. It creates a gap between how we want things to be and how they really are, and this is a great cause of frustration in life. We are on the Lord's timetable. He is in control, and we aren't.

I've learned to do my best, stop worrying about things I can't control, and trust that whatever happens in my life, there will be wonderful opportunities for learning and growth I just need to let life happen.

Mrs. Lena Hughes is the Chief Operating Officer of The Hughes Brothers, It Show, Voices of Glory, and The Hughes theatre. Moving her family from Salt Lake City to Branson demonstrates her exceptional faith and articulate leadership. Mrs. Hughes is extensively involved in the community, church and her family.

# A View From Jordan Creek

## Down on the farm

I'm descended from a long line of farmers. Just taking into account their time in the Ozarks, my direct ancestors arrived between the 1830s and 1880s and began their efforts as subsistence farmers in the hills and hollows of this area, trying to make a living from the rocky clay soil.

A portion of the family departed for California during the devastating farm depression of the 1920s and 30s, joining the mass migration underway during those difficult years. Of those who remained on either side, paternal and maternal, I was the first in this long line to have been born and raised "in town." I've been dedicated to my working-class/poor neighborhood all these years but maintained strong ties to my relatives in rural Missouri. (Interestingly, the second to be born and raised in Springfield, my only first cousin, relocated to a farm as an adult while working as a milk hauler and lives there now.)

I've spent considerable chunks of my life in long visits/ stays with my country cousins and am grateful for the experiences that has provided. I've gathered the eggs from the hen house and been pecked for my efforts, been to the milk parlor and been taught how to manually squirt milk into buckets (without getting kicked by the cow), castrated pigs, participated in slaughtering cattle (in a small meat packing operation owned and operated by cousins), wrung the necks of chickens for frying and all the other tasks that most city folks don't know about or want to know about.



Virgil Hill

Still, I'm neither a farmer nor a resident of rural America and don't pretend to be. I am, however, a passionate advocate for those who are.

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack received much attention, and criticism, for his remarks last winter regarding what he termed the growing "political irrelevance" of rural citizens, both those engaged in agriculture, now only about 2% or so of the population, and those living in small towns and the countryside. He spoke in the context of the failure to pass a Farm Bill in 2012 and the lack of consequences for those responsible. As a partisan matter, one of our major parties takes rural citizens for granted and the other now largely ignores them.

Because of the wave of vertical integration and consolidation, the number of pork producers, for example, has declined by 90% from 1980 to present. Of those who remain in pork and poultry, few are truly independent as they have become essentially contract labor for the handful of major meatpackers. One of them is now Brazilian-owned and another slated to become Chinese-owned. Though most cattle producers remain nominally independent, their num-

bers have also declined precipitously over the past decades and they also face a marketplace dominated by few ultimate buyers. Dairy producers have consistently been selling their milk for less than or barely more than the cost of production. Unsurprisingly, their numbers have also plummeted.

Grain producers have generally enjoyed good years recently, in part due to alternative fuel requirements, but, as with other farmers, are aging rapidly and the cost to acquire the fields and machinery needed for operations at current scale are prohibitive for beginners.

That aforementioned Farm Bill, which is actually a farm/nutrition/conservation/rural development bill in its component parts, is again facing substantial difficulties. All of us should be concerned at least all of us who eat. I don't expect that a wholly "post-agricultural" society would exist for very long.

(To be continued next month...)

Virgil J. Hill is a lifelong Ozarker and activist and is an ordained minister with Acts Ministry.

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# Acts Ministry, Inc. and the Real News-Review

BY PAUL COLLINS, Publisher RN-R SPRINGFIELD, MO - The Real News-Review newspaper is a part of the global outreach of a ministry headquartered in Springfield, MO. Begun in 1993, Acts Ministry is a non-profit, trans-denominational independent organization using several means to promote their mission statement which is, "Unity, In Christ, Through The Holy Spirit."

The vision of the Real News-Review is to be a newspaper that will bring attention to the power and influence of religion in today's world. We believe this can be accomplished by utilizing the print media to report religion in the news. Acts Ministry is a distinctively Christian organization seeking to present the

news of all religions in a very professional manner while, at the same time, maintaining a Christian perspective.

We believe that we can report the news with accuracy even though we see events through our paradigm as Christians.

Acts Ministry accepts no liability for the accuracy of news received via the wire services or submitted by others, and we cannot be held responsible for any statements made by reporters whether they are international, national or regional.

While reporting the news, we do not want to neglect our opportunity to present Christ to the reader. It is for that reason that you will find references to Jesus, how to receive him as Lord and Savior, and

live your life in accordance with his teachings. Please take note of the 3rd chapter of the Gospel of John. Embedded in the conversation between Nicodemus (a religious man of high standing) and Jesus, you find what may be the best known scripture verse in the Bible, John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." (NRSV) The word "may" is used twice. If you believe, you "may" not perish (in any way) but you "may" have eternal life.

If you want information about the simple plan of salvation, you can contact Acts Ministry by going to the website at [www.actsministry.org](http://www.actsministry.org). Or, you can call 417-886-0223.

## The Evidence of Faith's Substance

### Prophecies of the events leading up to the death of Jesus Christ

Can Christianity offer any real answers to the skeptic's questions? I think so. So why not share them? Maybe we are all a little embarrassed to admit that, unlike in our career specialty, we have little more than a Sunday School education when it comes to the factual evidence for Christianity. But it's evidence that forms the foundation for each side's position on Christianity.

The philosopher Bertrand Russell was once asked what he would say if he found himself standing before God and God asked him, "Why didn't you believe in Me?" Russell replied, "I would say, 'Not enough evidence, God! Not enough evidence!'" On the other hand, the great Scottish Pastor John Stott once said, "There is evidence for the deity of Jesus -- good, strong, historical, cumulative evidence; evidence to which an honest person can subscribe without committing intellectual suicide." How can we get such opposing views from such learned people?

People have a lot of questions. Christians have an opportunity to offer answers, but we must be solidly grounded in our faith to be viewed as worth listening to. Below are more evidences on the reality of Je-



Ed Croteau RN-R Columnist

sus Christ as the only answer to life.

8. Isaiah 9:1 (730BC) = He starts ministry in Galilee è fulfill in Jesus = Matthew 4:12,13,17

9. Isaiah 35:5 (730BC) = He performs miracles è fulfill in Jesus = Luke 7:21-23

10. Deuteronomy 18:18 (1200BC) = He speaks for God, not Himself è fulfill in Jesus = John 12:49-50

11. Psalm 78:2 (1000 BC) = He teaches in parables è fulfill in Jesus = Matthew 13:34

12. Zechariah 9:9 (500BC) = He enters Jerusalem on a donkey è fulfill in Jesus = Matthew 21:1-11

13. Psalm 69:9 (1000BC) = His zeal is only for God's honor è fulfill in Jesus = John 2:15-17

14. Psalm 118:22-23 (1000BC) = He offends the Jews è fulfill in Jesus = Matthew 21:33-42

15. Isaiah 49:6, 60:3 (730BC) = He is "Light" to Gentiles è fulfill in Jesus = Acts 13:47-48

16. Psalm 41:9 (1000BC) = He is betrayed by a close friend è fulfill in Jesus = Matthew 26:47-50

17. Zechariah 11:12 (500BC) = He is betrayed for 30 pcs of silver è fulfill in Jesus = Matthew 26:15

18. Zechariah 11:13 (500BC) = silver thrown in God's house è fulfill in Jesus = Matthew 27:5

19. Zechariah 11:13 (500BC) = silver used to buy Potter's Field è fulfill in Jesus = Matthew 27:6-10

20. Zechariah 13:7 (500BC) = He is abandoned by His disciples è fulfill in Jesus = Mark 14:50

21. Psalm 35:11 (1000BC) = He is accused by false witnesses è fulfill in Jesus = Matthew 26:59-60

22. Isaiah 53:7 (730BC) = He is silent before His accusers è fulfill in Jesus = Matthew 27:12-14

Ed Croteau is a resident of Lee's Summit and hosts a weekly study in Lee's Summit called "Faith: Substance and Evidence".

## America's Moral Compass

### Our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln

Our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln was a very moral man. As an example of Lincoln's commitment to moral absolutes, he declared that our country could not endure as half slave and half free, and he made reference to America's core consensus of values.

At the heart of Lincoln's greatness was the conviction, that the meaning of right and wrong is not just dependent upon time and place. He was unwavering in his belief that natural rights are inalienable and the Republic's founding principles should remain immune to change.

During his White House years, Lincoln was never a popular President, but he was



Dee Wampler RN-R Columnist

a credible one. In common with America's Founding Fathers, Lincoln understood that the first order of leadership is knowing the difference between right and wrong and

ordering one's life accordingly.

His was a deep commitment to morality. Lincoln knew self-government cannot survive if it treats morality as something we can ignore when it becomes inconvenient.

Hooray for Abraham Lincoln, a Christian man of deep faith!

Dee Wampler is an Author, Defense Attorney, Former Prosecutor, and a Native of Springfield, MO. He believes America needs a moral compass and advocates an honest look at America's Christian History.

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# USA Religion

## Call to Congress to end ban on pulpit politicking

### Religious leaders want the IRS to get out of American pulpits

By SARAH PULLIAM BAI-LEY

(RNS) A commission of religious leaders has called for clarity in churches' ability to endorse candidates and issues from the pulpit without fear of losing their tax-exempt status.

In a report sent Wednesday (Aug. 14) to Sen. Charles Grassley, an Iowa Republican who has spent years investigating the finances of high-profile televangelists, the commission called the regulation of speech of religious organizations "disturbing and chilling."

"The IRS guidelines are very vague, so ministers and non-profit leaders are afraid of the (appropriate) line," said Michael Batts, the independent commission's chairman. "We think it can be fixed without creating a monster of unintended consequences."

The Commission on Accountability and Policy for Religious Organizations grew out of Grassley's probe of ministry finances and makes recommendations for greater transparency and reform. It is overseen by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, which was founded in 1979 as a watchdog on ethical and financial wrongdoing. In Wednesday's report, the commission recommended that



A painting of George Whitfield preaching in the American colonies just prior to the American Revolution. Fiery preaching stirred the desire for freedom from religious and political tyranny. Without a doubt the America Revolution was very greatly impacted by the preaching of many pastors and evangelists from various denominations. What was then the heart of American freedom is now considered illegal by the government, because most churches have a not-for-profit status.

reprisal. Since 1954, IRS regulations allow clergy to speak out on issues but they must refrain from endorsing specific candidates.

Additionally, however, the report suggests that churches

churches' tax-deductible funds should be able to be disbursed for political purposes, the commission says that the policy should remain.

IRS enforcement has been inconsistent, the report sug-

hear about political candidates at church as white mainline churchgoers.

"The report shows that black churches have, for lack of a better word, gotten away with it for many years," said Erik Stanley, senior legal counsel for the Alliance Defending Freedom, who gave advice on the commission report. "Simply put, this gets the IRS out of the pulpit."

When ADF's Pulpit Freedom Sunday began in 2008, about 30 churches participated in the attempt to challenge the IRS by sending sermon transcripts in a bid to invite an IRS audit. In 2012, 1,600 churches participated, but none of them have heard from the IRS, Stanley said.

Clergy want the freedom to do and say many things, but it's unclear what kinds of churches will take up the mantle, said Eric McDaniel, a government professor at the University of Texas at Austin.

"I don't think many clergy want to open up a can of worms because then churches become havens for certain candidates and parties," McDaniel said. "It can turn churches into Demo-

cratic or Republican churches that preach the gospel."

In many ways, however, that's already happening. A day before the report came out, Baltimore-based pastor Jamal-Harrison Bryant tweeted his support for Cory Booker's campaign to become the next senator from New Jersey, while outspoken Roman Catholic Bishop Thomas Tobin of Providence, R.I., proudly touted his new status as a registered Republican.

A 2012 Pew Research Center poll suggests about two-thirds of Americans oppose churches endorsing candidates. And some clergy prefer maintaining the status quo.

"My concern is what that kind of change would make to the integrity and the unity of the church itself," said C. Welton Gaddy, president of The Interfaith Alliance. "It's about the sanctity of the religious voice in the context of worship and to compromise that authority would be devastating to religion in America."

The 80-person commission represents every major faith group in America.

## American Atheists leader wins fight for 'ATHEIST' license plate

BY KIMBERLY WINSTON

(RNS) Every state's department of motor vehicles routinely rejects applications for vanity license plates that are deemed offensive or in poor taste, but officials in New Jersey apparently didn't have the stomach for a high-volume fight over an application for an "ATHEIST" plate. New Jersey's Motor Vehicle Commission initially rejected the application from David Silverman, president of the Cranford, N.J.-based American Atheists, as "objectionable." When Silverman called the MVC to lodge a complaint, he was told the word is "offensive." A legal defense fund was set up and Silverman readied for battle, but on Wednesday (Aug. 28), Silverman was told he could have the plate. "Atheist" is not an offensive or objectionable word anymore than the word 'Jew' or 'Christian' or 'man' or 'woman' is," Silverman said. "It is a common noun, it is in the dictionary and it is not only allowed in multiple other states, the word is used on dog tags for the U.S. government. It is who and what I am." MVC officials, who declined to comment, cited a "clerical error," according to Silverman. New Jersey maintains a list of 1,085 words (or variations of them) that are banned from vanity plates, and any plate can be rejected at the discretion of department employees. While BOOBIES and KKK are included on the list, ATHEIST - in any form - is not. In fact, New Jersey has issued an "ATHEIST" plate before. The retired plate is hanging on the wall in Silverman's office, sent in by a supporter years ago. And the state approved Silverman's previous vanity plate, "BLASFMR," Minnesota, Alabama and Florida, among others, have all issued "ATHEIST" plates. Religion-themed vanity plates frequently get the nod from state officials. Georgia has approved "GOD4EVR" and "44JESUS," while people in Vermont are driving around behind "PSALM48" and "JN36TN." The last is a reference to a Bible verse, and the owner of the plate won the right to bear it in a federal appeals court after it was rejected by local officials.

Since 1954, IRS regulations allow clergy to speak out on issues but they must refrain from endorsing specific candidates.

members of the clergy should be able to say "whatever they believe is appropriate" from the pulpit without fear of IRS

should not be able to spend additional funds for political communication. Although some have advocated that

gests. A 2012 Pew Research Center study suggests that black Protestant churchgoers are eight times as likely to

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## Was Mystery priest an angel?

Continued from the front page

The Mercedes she was driving collided with another vehicle on a highway near Center, Mo. The accident crushed Lentz's vehicle into a ball of sheet metal that lay on the driver's side, Reed said.

Reed's team and emergency workers from several other jurisdictions tried for at least 45 minutes to remove the twisted metal from around Lentz. Equipment broke and the team was running out of choices. A helicopter waited to carry Lentz to the nearest trauma center.

Though Lentz appeared calm, talking about her church and her studies toward a dentistry degree, her vital signs were beginning to fail, Reed said.

"I was pulled off to the side by one of the members" of the helicopter evacuation team, Reed said. "He expressed to me that we were out of time. Her condition looked grim for her coming out of that vehicle alive. She was facing major problems."

At that point, Reed's team agreed to take the life-threatening chance of sitting the vehicle upright so that Lentz could be removed from it. This can be dangerous because a sudden change in pressure to the body can be

critical, he said.

That's when Lentz asked if someone would pray with her and a voice said, "I will."

The silver-haired priest in his 50s or 60s in black pants, black shirt and black clergy collar stepped forward from nowhere. It struck Reed as odd because the street was blocked off 2 miles from the scene and no one from the nearby communities recognized him.

"We're all local people from four different towns," Reed said. "We've only got one Catholic church out of three towns and it wasn't their priest."

Reed and the other emergency workers were on their knees. The priest of about medium build, maybe 6-foot-tall, stood above them.

"This priest approached Katie and began to pray openly with her," Reed said. "He had a bottle of anointing oil with him and he used that."

Another firefighter who had been watching said it appeared as if the priest also sprinkled Reed and two other emergency workers nearby with oil.

Everything happened quickly after that. Twenty emergency workers pulled

together and sat the car upright, Churchill Lentz said. Katie Lentz's vital signs improved and a rescue team from a neighboring community suddenly appeared with fresh equipment and tools. Lentz was removed and rushed to the hospital.

With Lentz gone, the rescue team prepared to clean up, Reed said. "We all go back to thank this priest and he's gone," he said.

Initially, they assumed he had to get to his home church to lead Sunday services. But then they looked at their photos of the scene.

"I have 69 photographs that were taken from minutes after that accident happened — bystanders, the extrication, our final cleanup — and he's not in them," Reed said. "All we want to do is thank him."

The Facebook page of Lentz's mother indicates Lentz is on the mend despite suffering two broken femurs, a broken tibia and fibia, broken left wrist, nine broken ribs, a lacerated liver, ruptured spleen and bruised lung.

Churchill Lentz said her daughter has undergone two surgeries and will undergo two more, but has been upgraded from critical to serious and is doing well.

"She sustained a lot of injuries, however, her face is beautiful, her teeth are perfect, she is sunshine, and everyone who's contacted us ... they are all saying the same thing, she never cried, she never screamed, she would just say, 'pray for me and pray out loud.'"

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# What Imams talk about during Eid

## “The Eid khutba is like the State of the Union address,” for Islam

By OMAR SACIRBEY

(RNS) In their holiday Eid al-Fitr khutbas, or sermons, on Thursday (Aug. 8) many imams across the country noted a growing climate of acceptance in America, but urged Muslims not to forget the problems facing their communities in the U.S. and overseas.

“The Eid khutba is like the State of the Union address,” said Oklahoma-born convert Suhaib Webb, imam of the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center, the biggest mosque in New England, to an overflowing crowd — men dressed in crisp robes, tunics, and three-piece suits, women in black abayas, long floral wraps, and colorful headscarves.

“Our community is at a unique crossroads,” Webb said, issuing a call for older Muslim generations to allow younger generations to have greater roles in community affairs. “There are a lot of young people with a lot of excitement, and a lot of old people with a lot of fear. And that’s not a healthy thing.”

Eid, which follows the Muslim fast of Ramadan, is a time when Muslims are supposed to unite, forgive grievances, and contribute to charity. In a sign of their growing numbers, many congregations held two or three services, or rented hotel ballrooms to accommodate the thousands of holiday observers in their finest clothes.

Muzammil Siddiqi, the imam at the Islamic Society of Orange County (Calif.) and a member of the Fiqh Council of North America, urged Eid worshippers to be involved in civic affairs. He said they



Muslims listening to the sermon, or khutba, by Imam Suhaib Webb at the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center, on the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Fitr. RNS photo by Omar Sacirbey

should support pathways to citizenship for illegal immigrants, protest government surveillance policies, and participate in the NAACP’s anti-racism program.

“We should also remain engaged in all civic matters serving our neighborhoods and our cities,” Siddiqi said in his khutba. “Islam teaches us that we should cooperate in all matters of righteousness, values and virtues with all people of any faith and any background.”

While Islamophobia is still a potent force in America, Siddiqi said, Muslim efforts to become more engaged in American public life has led to greater acceptance by the

broader American public.

Indeed, many Muslim observed Eid doing good work projects. In Washington state, some 4,000 Muslims were expected to visit non-Muslim neighbors offering holiday greetings and gifts.

The U.S. Postal Service has unveiled a stamp commemorating Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, the twin Muslim holy days.

The stamp, designed by Ventura, Calif.-born calligrapher Mohamed Zakariya, was first issued in 2001, and reissued a few times since. It features gold calligraphy that spells out “Eid Mubarek” in Arabic, the traditional greeting meaning, “May your religious festival be blessed.”

Some congregations celebrating Eid were much smaller, but showed an increasingly diverse Muslim-American landscape. The Los Angeles chapter of Muslims for Progressive Values was expecting several dozen worshippers at its Eid service, where the khutba was going to be given by a young gay member of the community.

As in years past, many imams focused on Muslim’s struggles abroad. “This Eid comes with a lot of stress and pain all over the Islamic world,” said Omar Shahin, president of the North American Imams Federation, and a native of Jordan who attends the Islamic Center of Laveen in Arizona. “The message I would send is that we need to stand with our Muslim brothers and sisters in these countries, and to pray to God that he relieves their pain and suffering.”

## Religious diversity is increasing at the office, and so are pitfalls

BY DAVID GIBSON (RNS) – The American workplace, like the rest of U.S. society, is becoming more religiously diverse and that is raising concerns about employer accommodations for believers — and increasing the odds for uncomfortable moments around the water cooler. Yet one potential flashpoint among workers does not involve new immigrant faiths but rather two indigenous communities: white evangelicals and unaffiliated Americans who constitute one of the fastest-growing segments of the population. A major factor contributing to workplace conflict, according to a survey released on Friday (Aug. 30), is that evangelicals — whose religious identity is tied to sharing their beliefs — are much more likely to talk about their faith at work than other religious and nonreligious groups. In fact, half of white evangelical Protestants said they share their beliefs with co-workers, compared to 22 percent of workers overall, according to the 2013 Survey of American Workers and Religion, sponsored by the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding. And one-third of evangelicals said they discuss religion frequently, compared to 14 percent of non-Christian believers, 10 percent of Catholics and 7 percent of white mainline Protestants. Moreover, nearly 9-in-10 white evangelical employees say they are somewhat or very comfortable when the issue of religion comes up in the workplace. Conversely, the research found that nonbelievers are reticent to discuss religion and 43 percent of them say they feel somewhat or very uncomfortable when the topic comes up. “This suggests the potential for workplace clashes between atheists and evangelical Protestants,” the report says. The survey, released for Labor Day, was conducted in March and April by the Public Religion Research Institute, which questioned more than 2,000 American adults in both English and Spanish. The poll has a margin of error of 2.8 percentage points. Given the findings, it is perhaps not surprising that both nonbelievers and evangelicals shared a heightened sense of bias: Nearly 6-in-10 atheists said they think people look down on their beliefs, and nearly 6-in-10 of white evangelicals agreed that discrimination against Christians has become as big a problem as discrimination against other religious minorities. “There’s a clear sense in the data, especially among white evangelicals, that other workers’ needs are being taken care of and theirs are not,” said Robert P. Jones, head of the Public Religion Research Institute. Jones added that along with their growing numbers, the “nones” are also increasingly confident in proclaiming their lack of religious affiliation, which in turn contributes to the potential for workplace interactions — and conflicts — over religion. David Sikkink, a sociologist of religion at the University of Notre Dame who reviewed the report, also noted that while most believers — as well as nonbelievers — don’t look to the office as a place to find meaning and direction in their lives, evangelicals often take the opposite view and see the workplace as a venue for living out their religious identity. “Evangelicals want to be different somehow, to take a stand, and to show that God is working in their lives through them,” Sikkink said. He said that does not always mean sharing the specifics of their faith, but can instead be demonstrated by the way evangelicals deal with workplace problems, or simply in their focus on developing friendships with their co-workers. Still, the endpoint of such relationships is a conversation about faith, “and eventually that may rub the nonreligious the wrong way.” Overall, the incidence of workplace conflicts and discrimination over

Continued on Page 9 See WORKPLACE

# Lutherans elect Elizabeth Eaton first female presiding bishop of ELCA

SARAH PULLIAM BAILEY

(RNS) The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on Wednesday (Aug. 14) elected the Rev. Elizabeth Eaton as the denomination’s first female presiding bishop. Eaton received 600 votes against incumbent Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, who received 287.

Eaton, the current ELCA bishop of Cleveland, is married to the Rev. Conrad Selnick, an Episcopal priest. Like Hanson, she is considered a moderate who supported the denomination’s decision to allow partnered gay clergy while allowing room for churches to disagree, according to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

A native of Cleveland, she received a masters of divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School.

“We are a church that is overwhelmingly European in a culture that is increasingly pluralistic,” Eaton told the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Pittsburgh shortly after the election.

“We need to welcome the gifts of those who come from different places, that is a conversation we need to have as a church.”

The ELCA, which has lost members nearly every year since its founding in 1987, experienced a dramatic drop when it lost nearly half a million members in 2010 and 2011.

Hanson is credited with leading the nation’s largest Lutheran body — with more than 4 million members in 9,638 congregations — with a steady hand during turbulent times as the ELCA wrestled with the gay policy that Hanson favored but was hesitant to push on the larger church.

Even so, under his watch the Chicago-based ELCA saw a small but significant schism as conservatives upset with the decision to allow gay clergy defected to a new rival denomination, the North American Lutheran Church.

The election was a surprise to many, as Hanson was expected to win an unprecedented third term after 12 years in office. Hanson was the third presiding bishop in the denomination’s history; three of four finalists for the position were women.

“When I stood before you 12 years ago, I told you this is not an election won, this is a call received. And now this call has been extended to Bishop



Rev. Elizabeth Eaton was elected the first female presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Photo courtesy ELCA

Eaton,” Hanson said at the assembly. “This is a humble and a holy privilege to serve the gospel as the pastor of this whole church.”

In June, Lutherans in Los Angeles elected the ELCA’s first openly gay bishop, four years after the denomination voted to allow openly gay men and lesbians to serve as clergy.

Eaton joins Episcopal Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, who in 2006 became the first woman to lead a church in the worldwide Anglican Communion. The two churches share a full communion agreement that allows shared clergy and joint ministry.

Eaton will serve a six-year term beginning Nov. 1.

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# World Religion

## Physicians group blames government for Myanmar religious strife Over 240 Muslims have been killed in the past year as Buddhists mobs burn homes and stores

**BY RICHARD EHRKICH**  
(RNS) Buddhists are killing Muslims in Myanmar with impunity because the government failed to stop the attacks, New York-based Physicians for Human Rights reported amid fresh assaults that left more Muslims homeless.  
During the past year, scattered clashes across Buddhist-majority Myanmar, also known as Burma, have left more than 240 people dead, most of them Muslims.

neighbors, police said. The fires also destroyed a mosque.  
“The Burmese government must make a concerted effort to allow an effective investigation into these abuses and hold perpetrators accountable,” the physicians group wrote in its report.  
More ominously, the report concluded: “While such massacres are not sweeping the country at present, the brazen nature of these crimes and the widespread culture of impunity

in Mandalay Division — during a 10-day trip that ended on August 21.  
Residents accused Quintana of bias against Buddhists involved in the Meiktila clashes, which occurred in March, and the government denied his claims.  
Quintana’s experience gave him “an insight into the fear residents felt when being chased down by violent mobs.” Police allegedly stood by as angry mobs beat, stabbed and burned to death 43 people, he said.  
Rakhine state’s Muslims describe themselves as citizens who are persecuted because they are minority ethnic Rohingya competing with Buddhists in the impoverished region.  
Buddhist militants and the government insist the Rohingya are not citizens but instead are Muslim ethnic Bengalis who have illegally migrated from neighboring Bangladesh during past decades.  
When Buddhists rampage and torch Muslims’ homes and businesses, driving them off their land, there are “multiple instances where police and/or the army attacked Rohingyas and other Muslims, or watched as they were attacked, instead of protecting them,” the physicians’ report said.



**Buddhist monks gather in their temple for meditation and instruction. Photo by Iam Gratton, courtesy Wikimedia commons**

*Police allegedly stood by as angry mobs beat, stabbed and burned to death 43 people.*

A mob of about 1,000 Buddhists burned more than 35 Muslim homes and a dozen shops on August 24 in Kanbalu in Myanmar’s central Sagaing Division after hearing rumors that a Muslim man sexually assaulted a young Buddhist woman, police told The Associated Press.  
Police arrested a male Muslim suspect but refused the mob’s demand to hand him over, sparking its arson attack against his innocent Muslim

in which these massacres occur form deeply troubling preconditions that make such crimes very likely to continue.  
“If these conditions go unaddressed, Burma may very well face countrywide violence on a catastrophic level, including potential crimes against humanity and/or genocide.”  
The U.N. special rapporteur for human rights, Tomas Quintana, investigated Buddhist attacks against Muslims in another central town — Meiktila,

## In Israel, Orthodox Jewish men demand beard-friendly gas masks

**BY MICHELE CHABIN**  
JERUSALEM (RNS) Fearful that Syria might retaliate against Israel if the U.S. launches a military strike, Orthodox Jews and others are demanding the Israeli government distribute gas masks that will fit over their beards. In recent days, as Orthodox Jews and other bearded men have gone to distribution centers to retrieve their protective hood-like gas masks, they learned the government has only a limited supply, earmarked solely for the elderly and people with breathing problems. Demand for protective hoods — as well as standard-issue gas masks — has soared since the U.S. administration confirmed that Syrian civilians were killed last week by chemical weapons. Last year, the Israeli



**With increased tensions between the USA and Syria, the possibility of nerve gas attacks on Israel by Syria become a real concern to Israelis. Photo: Stockphoto 123RF**

government decided to provide all citizens with masks in the event of a non-conventional chemical attack, but there is a severe shortage of hoods and to a lesser extent, conventional

masks, according to Nachman Shai, a member of Parliament. The Orthodox Shas party is demanding that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu order the mass production of the Bardas, a hooded device that was available to bearded men during the Gulf War, when Iraq attacked Israel with conventional weapons. Unlike traditional gas masks, which cannot form a seal over a beard, the hoods cover the entire head. Many Orthodox men do not shave their beards based on rabbinic interpretations of a biblical passage. Meir Green, an Orthodox Jew, said he was unable to procure a Bardas to fit over his beard. “If, heaven forbid, the masks are needed, there won’t be time to shave, even if a razor were available,” Green said.

## British clergy condemn ‘Go home or face arrest’ campaign and billboard

**By TREVOR GRUNDY**  
CANTERBURY, England (RNS) Two leading clergymen — one Catholic, the other Anglican — condemned a British government billboard and stop-and-search campaign aimed at picking up illegal immigrants and deporting them.  
Bishop Nick Baines, the Anglican leader of Bradford in northern England, derided the Ministry of Home Affairs’ controversial “go home” bus and van campaign and described it as divisive and ineffective.  
Bishop Patrick Lynch, one of the Roman Catholic Church’s authorities on immigration, said the government’s billboard campaign targeting illegal immigrants in several London

boroughs left the impression all immigrants and foreigners are unwelcome in England.  
Earlier this month, bus and van ads appeared across London with the slogan: “Go home or face arrest.” The Ministry of Home Affairs paid for the ads.  
A summer immigration crackdown has included spot identity checks and regular Ministry of Home Affairs updates on Twitter detailing the number of people arrested.  
“These cases need to be dealt with compassionately, especially when there are children involved,” Lynch told The Catholic Herald.  
Sarah Teather, a Catholic member of Parliament, suggested the announcements are

designed to make the government look tough on immigration.  
With unemployment hovering at 7.8 percent, some Parliament members and human rights workers say the government’s campaign could stoke ethnic tensions.  
Prime Minister David Cameron has made curbing illegal immigration a priority but faces calls to reassess the way government is measuring it. A recent report by a government watchdog committee said the current system was “little better than a best guess.”  
There are an estimated 570,000 illegal immigrants in Britain, many from Africa but also from eastern Europe.

## Prince Charles attends installation of Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

**BY TREVOR GRUNDY**  
CANTERBURY, England (RNS) Prince Charles will make history on Sunday (Sept. 1) when he attended the installation of Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis at a London synagogue. It will be the first time a British royal has attended such a ceremony.  
The heir to the throne will be among 1,400 guests at the synagogue that will include Jewish-born Ed Miliband, the leader of the opposition in the British Parliament, and Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster Vincent Nichols. Jewish leaders from England

and the Commonwealth will also attend.  
Prince Charles has floated the idea of taking the title “Defender of the Faiths” to reflect Britain’s multifaith society when he becomes king. Since the 1500s, English monarchs have been bestowed with the royal title “Defender of the Faith.”  
Outgoing Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, 65, led the community for the last 22 years. His next role will be as a roving Jewish educator, visiting communities around the world to inspire new generations of Jewish leaders.

A report in The Jewish Chronicle said the new chief rabbi will focus on strengthening Jewish education, and “realizing fully our potential for social responsibility.”  
“British Jewry has much to be proud of,” he said on the eve of his installation. Born in South Africa in 1956, Mirvis is married with five children. He is a former chief rabbi to Ireland. He holds a bachelor’s degree in education and classical Hebrew from the University of South Africa and was ordained a rabbi at Machon Ariel in Jerusalem. He is also trained as a shochet or ritual slaughterer.

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# 10 years after first gay bishop, Gene Robinson, was ordained, African Anglicans to take stock

## African leaders concerned with Anglican acceptance of gays

NAIROBI, Kenya (RNS) Concerned that the crisis in the worldwide Anglican Communion is deepening, conservative Anglican primates in Africa are organizing a second conference to discuss ways of returning the church to what they describe as biblical faithfulness.

The primates held the first conference in Jerusalem in 2008, five years after openly gay New Hampshire Bishop Gene Robinson was consecrated in the Episcopal Church. The action threw the communion into disarray.

At the Jerusalem meeting, the primates called for the creation of an Anglican province in North America to rival the Episcopal Church. Five years later, the primates say the new Anglican province, known as the Anglican Church in North America, is thriving.

Now, the archbishop of Nigeria and archbishops in East Africa have organized the second Global Anglican Future Conference at which they hope to accelerate the process that began in Jerusalem. The so-called GAFCON II meeting will take place Oct. 21-26 in Nairobi.

“We have succeeded in consolidation,” said Ugandan



Mombosa Anglican Church in Mombosa, Kenya. Photo: Courtesy Hahra Abdulmajid, Wikimedia Commons [www.comms.wikimedia.com](http://www.comms.wikimedia.com)

Anglican Archbishop Stanley Ntagali.

“Anglican churches have been planted in North America. The clergy trust one another to preach according to the Bible,” he said. “But the crisis in the communion continues to deepen as more (homosexual) consecrations occur.”

In addition to the consecra-

tion of gay bishops, the African primates are concerned with the growing acceptance of same-sex unions in the West. They say attempts to discipline the Episcopal Church were not successful, and, as a result, a “spiritual cancer” has spread to other provinces, including the Anglican Church of Canada, the Church of Eng-

land, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church in Wales, and the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

In their words, GAFCON II seeks to restore good order, theological integrity and biblical faithfulness.

“We need to see the overthrow by some churches of the creation order of female and male as just one symptom of the disease,” wrote Kenyan Anglican Archbishop Eliud Wabukala, chairman of the GAFCON primates’ council in a letter to the conference dated Thursday (Aug. 22). “The cause is spiritual.”

The primates remain optimistic that Archbishop Justin Welby, the new global leader of the Anglican Communion, may prevent a split since he is on record as being opposed to gay consecrations.

“The primates are happy with Welby since he has been attending our meetings,” said Ntagali. “He has taken time to follow what we are doing and he understands we are not breaking the communion.”

# Pope Francis, Jordan king Abdullah say dialogue is ‘only option’ in Syria conflict

BY ALESSANDRO SPECIALE

VATICAN CITY (RNS) Pope Francis and Jordan’s King Abdullah II reaffirmed that dialogue is the “only option” to end the conflict in Syria, just as the United States and its European allies consider launching a military strike against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

The two leaders met for the first time on Thursday (Aug. 29) at the Vatican. The pontiff and the king, accompanied by his wife Queen Rania, talked in private for 20 minutes.

According to an official Vatican statement, during the meeting “special attention” was given to Syria’s “tragic situation.”

Talks of a possible Western military intervention in the Syrian crisis intensified after reports of a chemical weapons attack against civilians in Damascus last week.

President Obama told PBS’ “Newshour” that he was convinced the attack had been carried out by the forces of Assad

option to put an end to the conflict and to the violence that every day causes the loss of so many human lives, especially amongst the helpless civilian population.”

The Catholic Church has been following with concern the radicalization of Syria’s civil war. The country hosts a sizable Christian minority, which has mostly sided with Assad during the two-year long conflict.

In an interview with Vatican Radio, Archbishop Maroun Lahham, the vicar for Jordan of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, said he hoped the “world’s ‘bigs’” would “make peace instead of war and find a peaceful solution.”

Other Syrian Catholic leaders have been even more vocal in condemning a possible Western intervention.



King Abdullah II of Jordan Photo courtesy US State Department

President Assad is a member of the minority Alawite sect with links to Shiite Islam, while most rebels are Sunni, with a growing prominence of Islamist groups with ties to al-Qaida.

Since the beginning of the Syria conflict, neighboring Jordan has seen the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees. It fears Western intervention will bring more instability to the region.

The country, with its small but dynamic Christian minority, has also been actively promoting Christian-Muslim dialogue in recent years. Early next month, King Abdullah will host a conference on the role of Christians in the Middle East in Amman, Jordan’s capital.

The issue is deeply felt at the Vatican, which fears that the rise of Islamist movements fueled by the Arab Spring revolutions will threaten the survival of the millenia-old Christian communities in the region.

# Pope Francis celebrates Mass with wafers made by Argentine inmate

BY ALESSANDRO SPECIALE

VATICAN CITY (RNS) Since mid-July, Pope Francis has been using Communion wafers made by an Argentine prisoner in the daily Mass he celebrates at the Vatican’s Santa Marta residence.

The hosts are made by Gabriela Caballero, a 38-year-old woman who is serving a seven-year jail term in the San Martin Penitentiary outside Buenos Aires.

Her story was revealed by the Argentine news agency NOVA and picked up by Il Sismografo, a blog with close connections to the Vatican.

Caballero gave the hosts, together with a long letter to the pope, to Bishop Oscar Ojea of San Isidro, who regularly visits the prison. Ojea, in turn, delivered the hosts to the pope on July 16 during a visit to the Vatican.



The Eucharist, or Communion wafer, has many designs and is used in many churches for regular communion services. Stock photo

Francis began using the hosts on July 18; the day after he wrote back to Caballero, thanking her for the gift.

“From tomorrow on I will celebrate Mass with these hosts and I can tell you it’s very touching for me,” Francis wrote.

“Just reading ‘Dear Gabriela’ was a shock for me, as I’m in a place where I am deprived of my freedom,” she told the NOVA interviewer as she showed the pope’s handwritten note.

“In the middle of this darkness ... I am proud to know that one can reach the Vatican even from prison,” she added.

Caballero, who has served three years of her sentence, started her small host-making activity in one of the prison’s bathrooms, using old machines given to her and some other convicts by some nuns.

“Our hosts are handcrafted. Today most machines are digital, have a thermostat ... Ours have nothing like that,” Caballero said in the interview.

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# Religion and Life

## Wives find renewed faith after husband’s ‘visit’ heaven

Death and near-death experience have sparked several books and much interest in the afterlife.

By CORRIE MITCHELL

(RNS) Eva Piper considered herself a shallow Christian until the accident that revitalized her faith and turned her Baptist pastor husband, Don Piper, into the best-selling author of “90 Minutes in Heaven.” “It wasn’t until Don’s accident that I really opened myself up to a really honest relationship with the Lord,” said Eva Piper, who says she’s embarrassed to recall her superficial faith. Eva Piper writes about life after her husband’s alleged visit to heaven in “A Walk Through the Dark,” released on July 30. Her book comes nine years after the publication of her husband’s book, which spent more than five years on The New York Times’ best-seller list.

While the survivors’ tales of visiting the Pearly Gates have been a boon for publishers, they’ve also had a more direct impact on spouses and parents. For the family members, life — and faith — changes nearly as much as it did for the men they nearly lost.

Don Piper was hit by a semi-truck while driving home, and paramedics pronounced him dead at the scene. But, 90 minutes later, he said he was prayed back to life by a fellow pastor.

Eva Piper’s book, which is more of a practical guide for caregivers, recalls her frustration with her husband’s disappointment at being brought back to earth and long nights spent beside hospital beds asking God “Why?”

The niche genre of “to-heaven-and-back” books have hit bookshelves with surprising regularity — and success — in recent years. The popular book “Heaven Is for Real” is being adapted into a movie, coming out in 2014.

Todd and Sonja Burpo, the

parents whose 4-year-old son Colton is the subject of “Heaven Is for Real,” have their own book out, “Heaven Changes Everything,” about the impact that their son’s near-death experience had on their lives. The original book has sold more than 7.5 million copies after 22 printings.

Writer Paula Black has recounted her husband Dale’s trip to heaven following a plane crash he survived at age 19. She intersperses her narrative with questions she asked her husband, ones she thought a reader would ask.

“We haven’t felt like it was the right time to do anything with it, but we probably will at some point,” Paula Black said of the as-yet-unpublished book.

“That’s because it’s impacted me so much.”

Her husband wasn’t initially interested in being “one of those people” writing about something that can’t be proven. But eventually, she said, it had such an impact on her that he finally agreed to include it in his 2010 book, “Flight to Heaven.”

“It has completely transformed my faith,” said Paula Black, who didn’t hear about her husband’s trip to heaven until 40 years after the fact.

She said Dale Black’s experience allowed her to grasp the concept of “God is love,” which took on a new reality and depth after he told her about heaven. Raised Christian, Paula Black said talking with her husband about his experience brought substance to her faith, and enriched Scripture.

“It changed my understanding of who God is,” she said. “I had a saving relationship through Jesus, but it brought it so much alive.”

Her husband originally planned to write a book about

surviving a “non-survivable crash,” but when Paula Black found out he’d been to heaven, she said that had to be in his book. “It has defined you,” she told him. “Heaven changed you.”

Both wives said that their husbands’ accounts made heaven more real for them. The same is true for Annette Wiese, whose husband Bill Wiese penned “23 Minutes in Hell” in 2006. She said she had never given much thought to hell before the book.

“I never realized how important the decision of faith is to that degree and impact,” she said. She believed her husband’s vision right away, “because I knew his character.”

Despite the positive approaches and renewed faiths of these wives, many critics have worked to dispel first-hand afterlife accounts.

Esquire magazine recently reported on Eben Alexander (author of “Proof of Heaven”) as a man looking to reinvent himself in the wake of a rocky neurosurgery career. Oliver Sacks, a noted neurologist, recently dissected the scientific explanation for out-of-body and near-death experiences that lead to religious epiphanies in The Atlantic.

“While it is understandable that one might attribute value, ground beliefs, or construct narratives from them, hallucinations cannot provide evidence for the existence of any metaphysical beings or places,” Sacks wrote. “They provide evidence only of the brain’s power to create them.”

Eva Piper said she’s received a scattering of negative emails and notes, “but far less than I imagined.” Most people, she said, “really, really want to know about heaven. They want to know that there’s a better place than where we’re living now.”



Even Piper, author, speaker and wife of pastor Don Piper who was pronounced dead at the scene of a auto accident. Ninety minutes later Don came back to life and shared his experience in visiting heaven while he was dead. Photo: Internet

## Christian attorney Wampler sees mission field coming to him daily

By JACKIE SCOTT

SPRINGFIELD, MO

I asked Springfield attorney Dee Wampler if he was an attorney who happened to be a Christian or a Christian who just happens to be an attorney. Without hesitation he said “I’m defiantly a Christian who just happens to be an attorney.”

He went on to say that his relationship with Jesus Christ is his top priority, his family is his next priority and then comes his career.

However after visiting with Wampler for a short time, it becomes apparent that being an attorney is much more than a career, it is his calling and mission in life.

People sometimes wonder how he can defend murders, rapists, sexual offenders, drug addicts, and even members of the mafia, but for Wampler it is all part of his mission and calling.

“I represented John Gotti, boss of the New York Gambino crime family. Who else would have had the opportunity to talk to him about God?”

His mission field walks into his office every day of the week in the form of clients who are going through a traumatic time in their lives. “I tell them if they will go to church regularly for the next six months they will be able to find some character witnesses when they go to trial. I know if they attend church regularly for six months there’s a good chance they will encounter Jesus Christ who will change their lives forever,” Wampler said.

“I always insist those that have alcohol or drug offenses go through a treatment program,” he added. “People come to me and pay me money to give them advice, so when I tell



Dee Wampler, Christian Attorney in Springfield, MO. Photo Courtesy Dee Wampler

them to do something, they do it.” He paused for a moment and added, “some of them, that is. Some will not listen and do what I tell them to do...I fire them. I tell them, you pay me to give you advice. If you are not going to do what I tell you, then you’ll have to find someone else to represent you.” Wampler said,

“I can’t always predict how their case is going end up, but if they listen to me and do what I tell them to do they will come through this experience in better shape than if they do not.”

**“I represented John Gotti, boss of the New York Gambino crime family. Who else would have had the opportunity to talk to him about God?”**

~Springfield Attorney Dee Wampler

Wampler admits he has more than his fair share of critics. “I had lunch with former Attorney General John Ashcroft one day and I asked him how he handled all the criticism. “

“What criticism,” he asked? This was some amount of time after 911 when the national media had something critical to say about him on a daily basis.”

“I said you are being criticized in the national media daily.”

Ashcroft said, “I don’t listen to it. I have staff members that brief me on events in the news, but I don’t pay attention to it. My commander and chief told me, make sure 911, does not happen again, that is my focus, I can’t get distracted.”

“I learned from John Ashcroft,” Wampler said. “Most critics are people who are not doing anything themselves,” he added.

Each Christmas, Wampler says he will get forty or fifty Christmas Cards from people, many of whom he says he honestly does not remember, thanking him for helping them make a change in their lives.

In addition to defending clients, Wampler has taken stands on religious and moral issues and has waged a personal campaign to get the words “In God We Trust” displayed in cities across the nation. He says he is responsible for getting 80 cities to display those words in city buildings. His most recent at the time of this article was Bakersfield California.

“I still haven’t managed to get the Springfield School District to put Christmas Break on the school calendar instead of Winter Break,” he added.

Wampler followed in his father’s footsteps and credits both his parents with shaping the man he would become. “My mother always told me I was special. Now, with the advances in DNA, we know we are all unique and special,” he said.

Wampler went on to say “My Dad used to tell me as a kid I had one job and that was to make good grades. He said there might be others who were smarter, but I could out work all of them. I wasn’t the sharp-knife in the drawer; school work did not come easy. I really had to work at it to make the grades.”

That work ethic has stayed with Wampler his entire life. Now into his 48th year as an attorney, he admits he works seven days a week and shows no signs of slowing down. In addition to his law practice, he has found time to write and publish nine books and is working on a tenth.

He has also been very involved with his community and charity work. “I’ve found the more involved I get and the more I give to charities, the more my business grows. I didn’t do it to grow my business, but it just seemed to work that way,” he said. Mr. Wampler has a monthly column in the Real News-Review.

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# Does Pledge of Allegiance violate student rights?

## Massachusetts Supreme Court to hear challenge to Pledge of Allegiance

BY KIMBERELY WINSTON

(RNS) Massachusetts’ highest court on Wednesday (Sept. 4) will consider whether the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance is a violation of students’ rights.

Since the addition of the phrase “under God” in 1954, the pledge has been challenged repeatedly as a violation of the separation of church and state. In 2004, one case reached the Supreme Court, but ultimately failed, as have all previous challenges.

But the current case before the state’s Supreme Judicial Court, *Doe v. Acton-Boxborough Regional School District*, is different because lawyers for the plaintiffs, an anonymous atheist couple, won’t be arguing about federal law but rather that the compulsory recitation of the pledge violates the state’s equal rights laws. They argue that the daily recitation of the pledge is a violation of their guarantee of equal protection under those laws.

This change of tack in pledge challenges is modeled on a successful precedent laid down in the same court on gay marriage. In 2003, Massachusetts’ Supreme Judicial Court ruled 4-3 in favor of a same-sex couple seeking the right to marry under the state’s equal rights laws. Their win led to similar successful challenges in other state courts — something that could happen here



Children recite the Pledge of Allegiance during a ground breaking ceremony signifying the official start of a yearlong construction project to completely rebuild the installation’s Hillside and Carter Lake Elementary Schools in the Clover Park School District at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., July 30, 2012. Photo: Courtesy DefenseMinistri.mil, Wikimedia Commons, www.commonswikimedia.com

if judges rule for the plaintiffs.

“You would then see a rash of state court lawsuits challenging the pledge all over the country,” said Eric Rassbach, deputy general counsel for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which is arguing for the defendants. “A win for us would completely avoid that unnecessary harm. And it would affirm that it is not discriminatory to have the words

‘under God’ in the pledge.”

“There is disagreement, but there is not discrimination,” Rassbach continued. “That is what is at the heart of this — disagreement about what the government should do.”

The plaintiffs are represented by the American Humanist Association, a national advocacy group for humanists and other secularists. David Niose, the plaintiffs’ attorney and

president of the AHA, could not be reached for comment.

The defendants won the first round in June 2012 when a lower court judge ruled that daily recitation of the pledge did not violate the Massachusetts Constitution, the school district’s anti-discrimination policy or state law. The upcoming oral arguments address an appeal of that decision.

# Eugene Allen known as a man of faith

Continued from front page

married to Gloria (Winfrey). The movie spans his personal journey from segregation to integration, during which he tended to keep his mouth shut about the goings-on inside the White House as well as the civil rights struggles roiling the nation.

Church members recalled that Allen, like the fictional Cecil Gaines, was fairly reticent.

“He loved that job, was committed to it,” said fellow trustee Dolores Causer of his White House job serving eight presidents. “But he never really would discuss anything other than to say he loved his work and he enjoyed each and every one of them.”

The writer of the four-page obituary in Allen’s funeral program, however, gained some insights into his thoughts about working with U.S. presidents:

\* Harry S. Truman was “hands down, the best dressed

President.”

\* He considered Dwight Eisenhower’s decision to send troops to enforce school desegregation in Little Rock, Ark., “an especially admirable act.”

\* He said Lyndon Johnson’s action on civil rights “would be the jewel in his crown.”

\* “He was much grieved by (Richard) Nixon’s demise and ultimate resignation.”

\* He “failed to see the ... humor in the Saturday Night Live impersonations of (Gerald) Ford, calling him the best athlete in the White House in his time.”

\* “In the last year of his life, Eugene admitted that another young couple (the Obamas) had indeed entered the White House who possessed the Kennedy magic.”

Allen acknowledged that he was especially fond of the Reagans, who invited him —

in real life and in the movie — to a state dinner before he retired in 1986. “He often talked about how nice they were to him,” recalled church member Marion Washington, who knew Allen when he was promoted to maitre d’.

In the movie, Cecil and Gloria Gaines are portrayed as a Christian couple, with a crucifix over their bed and a devotion to the Bible.

Director Lee Daniels, a Philadelphia native who grew up in the oldest black Episcopal church in the country, said it was important for the movie to include religious elements. He fought to include a scene depicting a church fundraiser for the Freedom Riders in which a choir sings “Woke Up This Morning With My Mind Stayed On Freedom.”

“You can’t tell a story about the civil rights movement without the gospel and gospel

music,” he said. “You just simply can’t. It’s impossible.”

Wil Haygood, who wrote the 2008 Washington Post story that first brought Allen’s story to light, said it was more than chance that allowed him to bring public attention to Allen’s otherwise private career.

“There was a higher force that led me to Mr. Allen’s front door,” said Haygood, who made dozens of calls before tracking down Allen. “He had a landline. If he would have had a cell phone I would have never found him.”

Now, he said, after Allen worked quietly behind the scenes while presidents from Truman to Reagan were in the limelight, the roles are reversed.

“To me, in a way, it’s almost biblical: The last shall be first,” said Haygood. “He’s not working in the White House theater, serving popcorn. He’s the star on the big screen.”

## Discrimination in the workplace

Continued from page 5

religion seems to be a fairly significant issue, according to the survey, with one-third of respondents reporting that they have seen or experienced incidents of religious bias in the workplace. The most frequently cited problems were not interactions with co-workers but instead related to a failure of companies to provide sufficient accommodations for believers, especially non-Christians. Half of those respondents said that their employers are ignoring their religious needs. Among the other findings: \* Nearly one-quarter (24 percent) of the respondents reported being required to work on the Sabbath or a religious holiday and 13 percent said they attended company-sponsored events that did not include kosher, halal, or vegetarian options; \* Less than half (44 percent) of workers said their employers had flexible work hours to permit religious observances or prayer and 21 percent said their company had a policy allowing employees to swap holidays to accommodate religious observances; \* Four in 10 workers said their company had materials explaining their policy on religious discrimination, and 14 percent said their employer had programs to teach workers about religious diversity. On the other hand, while the Tanenbaum report says that American companies need to do more to accommodate religious believers, it also found strong incentives for businesses to adapt: The survey showed that employees at companies that were sensitive to religious needs reported better morale and were much less likely to look for another job. “With a growing number of nonreligious workers and a growing number of workers who are not Jewish or Christian, many employers are just figuring out how to navigate these waters,” said Jones.



# Acts Television Network

Continued from front page

*son Now.* This program will look at the roots of the “live music capital of the world” and how it has grown and developed into what it is today.

Viewers will go behind the scenes and get to meet some of their favorite performers and hear about their lives, on and off stage. *Branson Now*, will premier Thursday, September 12th at 7 p.m.

The third program will be *Our Heroes* hosted by Sarah Hord, president of Rolling Thunder, a not for profit veteran’s motorcycle group that is dedicated to raising funds to assist veterans, active military and their families, with special needs.

The show will feature veterans telling their stories, updates on events planned for veterans, and a discussion of veteran’s issues. *Our Heroes* will begin, Tuesday September, 10th.

Current shows in production include: *Thrift Store Diva*, hosted by Shelia Artt who will show shoppers how to stretch their budget without sacrific-

ing quality and style both in wardrobe and home décor. As the mother of four fashion conscious teenage daughters and a rapidly growing boy, Mrs. Artt learned to be a true “thrift store diva” out of necessity.

Our Home Repair show, *Fix it Right* will feature simple repairs the average person can learn to do. The host, Handy Man Bob, will take you through step by step instructions showing his female co-host how easy it is to make simple everyday money saving repairs.

This is Christian television “out of the box,” Wining admits. “We are going out into the marketplace and providing quality family-friendly programming that everyone (whatever their religious affiliation) can enjoy.”

Interwoven within the programs will be personal testimonies of how the hosts and their guests came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and how they have turned to the Lord in difficult times.

“We want the television to be highly connectational,” says

Wining. “We believe this is a very sellable product. I don’t know of anyone out there that has connected all the dots by offering a complete marketing package that includes print, radio and television, he said.”

Acts Television Network is launching on Ustream which has 26 million viewers, with the high concentration of viewers in Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas.

The network will be picking up additional internet carriers and selected cable markets in the near future.

Acts radio has a similar coverage footprint and the newspaper has a print distribution of 27,000 per month, with another 11,000 in online readership and growing.

Acts Media Group is unique in that it has a great mix of retro and cutting edge avenues. The paper is something you can pick up and hold in your hands. How many, radios do you see in the average home or office compared to computers?

Continued on page 12

# Stained Glass Theatre



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# Religion in Society

## Stained Glass Theatre: Drama with a message

*continued from the front page*

the Production of Family Outings) shares, “I came to SGT at a time when I had a need in my life for a new group of friends. I got more than new friends; I got a new family.” Gary Norcross (who plays Jim Bailey in the same show) said, “I love being able to present scriptural truth in a practical way to people who may not attend church. [The play] Family Outings, for example, deals with some intense family issues that may not ever be addressed from the pulpit.”

The Theatre is trans-denominational, drawing a volunteer cast and crew from a wide variety of churches. “This is a ministry that brings people together. Our team comes from different churches and denominations. We leave our differences at the door and unite for the purpose of glorifying God and proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior,” Young said.

When asked how many people have been involve with SGT over the years, Jenkins said, “Depending on the size of the cast, it can take over 100 volunteers per production -- when counting actors, lighting and sound technicians, set builders, painters and dressers, costumers, ushers, concessions workers and box office volunteers.” He estimates well over 1000 volunteers have contributed their time and talents to providing the Springfield region with wholesome, family-oriented productions with a positive message.

The community theatre has seen their share of miracles over the years. When they

decided to move to their current facility in Ozark, they took possession of the building in February of 2003 and got their building permit in March. The architects said it would take 4 to 5 months and approximately \$160,000 to complete the renovation. According to Jenkins, “From the time we got the permit and started construction, we spent a total of \$52,000 and opened in 9 weeks.” The donations of labor and materials were astounding. “The architects forgot to figure God into their estimate,” he said.

The facility has stadium style seating for about 195 in the lower level with another 73 seats in balcony. The theatre is totally ADA compliant. Ironically, it does not have any stained glass.

As with any community theatre venture SGT can only operate with community involvement. You can get involved in many ways – from volunteering, to being in the cast or crew of a production, to donating equipment or services. There is always a need for non-cast personnel to serve as ushers, box office or concession stand attendants, costumers, set –production and maintenance.

SGT is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible. Businesses or patrons can sponsor a production or part of a production while getting a significant advertising package in return.

Tickets are \$11 for adults and \$9 for children at the box office. A \$1 discount, for tick-

ets purchased at least 24 hours in advance, is available.

Group rates are also available. Season passes are \$56 per person and are good for one performance of each of the seven productions in the season. It also includes two free “guest punches.”

A Premier Pass is good for one person for multiple performances of each production and includes four “guest punches.” Premier Passes are \$80.

Jenkins also noted a special offer for area pastors. Lead pastors and one guest are given complimentary passes based on availability for the evening’s performance. A business card or church bulletin/brochure with your title or position on it will serve as ministry identification.

Ironically their low tickets prices actually create a problem for them. According Jenkins, people are used to paying \$35 or more to see a show in Branson. “I’m afraid there is a perception that: ‘if it’s only that much, how good could it be?’ I would put the quality of our productions, and the over-all theatre experience, at or above that of any Branson show,” He said

The 2013-14 season will be spectacular, with all new productions in the lineup. The season kicks off September 19th with “Family Outings,” a special play written by nationally recognized playwright, Paul McCusker, of Focus on the Family Radio Theatre and Adventures in Odyssey fame. In Family Outings, Jim Bailey is convinced that buying



The auditorium of the Stained Glass Theatre in Ozark, MO. The fully ADA compliant facility seats nearly 175 people comfortably and offers concessions for guests. Photo courtesy of The Stained Glass Theatre.

a cabin in the woods is the ticket to solving his family’s problems. As they spend three different weeks together, they learn more about each other than they bargained for during their “Family Outings.”

The Christmas show, opening Nov. 14, 2013, is Keeping Watch by Shellie Folts. The new year brings The Next Step, written by Ginger Casebeer, It opens January. 16, 2014 fol-

lowed by A Place Called Eden by Ron Boutwell which opens March 6. The End Came in Spring, written by Mike Upshaw, opens April 24 followed by Bookends by Crystal Kiser which opens June 12. The last show of the season is The Land of Nod by Ginger Casebeer opening July 31.

For more information about shows, tickets, or how you can get involved in community

theatre please visit the SGT web site at [www.sgtheatre.com](http://www.sgtheatre.com) or call 417-581-9192. You can also buy DVDs or play scripts on the website.

**There is a place for you in community theatre: in the audience, on the stage or behind the scenes. The Stained Glass Theatre invites you to be a part of impacting the Ozarks.**



Rev. A. R. Bernard of New York City gave the invocation Aug. 28, 2013 at the “Let Freedom Ring” commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and Dr. Martin Luther King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech. On Aug. 28, 1963, King ended his speech with a call to “let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire ... from the mighty mountains of New York ... from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania ... from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado ... from the curvaceous slopes of California ... from Stone Mountain of Georgia ... from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee ... and from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.” RNS photo by Adelle M. Banks

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# Does the ‘Emergent Church’ represent a threat to the ‘Voters Values’ movement? Some conservatives think so

BY SARAH PULLIAM BAILEY (RNS) – Christian conservatives who think Satan is using communism and Islam to bring down America can add a new “adversary” to the list: the Emergent Church movement.

A portion of the upcoming Values Voter Summit in Washington will stray from its usual focus on politics and consider the Emergent Church as one of three “channels the adversary is using to bring America down.” Art Ally, president of The Timothy Plan, a Florida-based mutual fund company devoted to “biblically responsible investing,” will lead the breakout session. “Why would Satan use Communism? It’s a godless form of government,” said Ally.

“Why would Satan use Islam? Same reason. It’s not a religion. It’s a movement to dominate the world under the guise of religion. The Emergent Church plays right into that by weakening further our church community.”

The Emergent (or Emerging) Church was a hot topic a decade ago as authors and pastors like Brian McLaren and Tony Jones challenged churches to adapt to a postmodern culture, but the movement never organized itself well, and the debate surrounding it eventually died down.

“The Emerging Church was

founded to get the evangelical church to take art, social justice and other what might be considered progressive issues more seriously. It was also founded to get the Mainline church to loosen their neckties a little bit,” Jones said.

“If we had one one-thousandth of the adherence of either of communism or Islam, we’d be doing pretty well.”

Jones was surprised by the Emerging Church’s inclusion in the conference, given that the movement has largely gone under the radar.

“When I first saw this, I thought it was a headline from The Onion,” Jones said. “Some people say the Emerging Church is dead, other people say the Emerging Church has spread so far it’s just been absorbed into the fabric of the American church, so maybe that’s what frightens these guys.”

But what Ally considers to be part of the Emergent Church might include a wider definition than what Jones and McLaren would. While hesitant to name names, Ally suggested that megachurch pastors Rick Warren, Bill Hybels and recently retired pastor John Piper could be considered emergent.

“These guys don’t even talk about sin for fear it’s driving away the postmodern generation,” Ally said. “The



Some people think the Emergent Church, characterized by a more casual worship and emphasis on the arts and social issues, has become a threat to more conservative Christian values. Stock Photo 123RF

Emergent Church has watered down biblical Christianity to the point that John the Baptist would have been shocked.”

Many theologians, however, would likely not include Warren, Hybels and Piper in the Emergent camp. Piper, for example, has been critical of the Emergent Church, saying it is “going away from the gospel.”

Either way, the movement could be considered sputtering, said Scot McKnight,

a New Testament scholar at Northern Seminary in Lombard, Ill.

“It’s an unaware perception of what’s going on in the church today,” McKnight said. “I’m thinking this is going to appeal to people who are 70 and above.”

The Timothy Plan has been featured in Christianity Today and World magazine, which called it the “granddaddy of evangelical invest-

ment funds.”

The mutual fund company, which has a portfolio of about \$700 million, avoids investing in companies that it deems contrary to Scripture. For instance, it declines to invest in Starbucks because of the company’s stance on gay rights.

The first 200 attendees at Ally’s breakout session will receive complimentary copies of Curtis Bowers’ DVD on Communism, Paul Blair’s DVD on

Islam and Roger Oakland’s book “Faith Undone.”

The Family Research Council’s annual Values Voter Summit is seen as a platform for Republican and Tea Party luminaries to reach politically minded social conservatives. Confirmed speakers this year include Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky.; Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis.; Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla.; Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn.; and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee.

A spokesman for FRC said that those who sponsor breakout panels choose their own content.

In 2007, the summit hosted a debate between Sojourners founder Jim Wallis and Richard Land, then-president of the Southern Baptists’ Ethics and Religious Commission, but it has generally strayed away from theological debates.

“Aspects of Emergent have become popular in Mainline Protestantism, and more regularized in pockets of evangelicalism,” said Daniel Treier, a theology professor at Wheaton College outside Chicago. “I would speculate that the Values Voters are up in arms because of some prominent Emergent tensions over sexual ethics, its general aversion to right-wing culture wars, and thus its perceived tendency to go Democrat.”

# Another way for Jews to atone this Yom Kippur: the eScapegoat

## Online site allows Jews (and others) to confess their sins in preparation for the Day of Atonement

BY LAUREN MARKOE

(RNS) The weeks leading up to the Jewish High Holy Days are supposed to be marked by self-questioning: What failings must I atone for, and to whom must I apologize?

A group of artists, writers and animators are hoping a cartoon goat may help.

They call it the eScapegoat, and it’s supposed to approximate the original scapegoat, described in Leviticus as an

important player in the atonement ritual of the ancient Israelites, who symbolically placed their sins upon the animal and sent it into the wilderness.

But for some people, the eScapegoat serves as a receptacle for more serious wrongs: “I don’t always treat people as people, but as means to my ends.”

Sarah Lefton, executive director of G-dcast (many observant Jews do not spell out the word “God”), hatched the idea. The story of the scapegoat is one Lefton reads each year in synagogue during the High Holidays, the 10-day period that begins with Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, on Sept. 4 and includes Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Jews halted the scapegoat ritual after the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.

“It’s one of the more colorful, tangible, wacky, woolly things in the Bible,” she said. “And no one seems to know it.”

“How cool would it be,” Lefton thought, “to make a virtual goat.”

With the eScapegoat, you go online, or download the app, and watch a little animated Bible lesson.

“Once a year, on what we now call Yom Kippur, the High

Priest placed all the Israelites’ sins on a goat and set it loose in the wilderness,” the website explains.

“Today we reflect and try to clean our slates during Elul, the Hebrew month before Yom Kippur.”

The site asks participants their age, but not their name, and provides space for typing in their sins. (One user’s sin was lying about his age.) Then G-dcast wants to know one more thing, as the goat is pictured standing at the edge of a cliff: “Will you be celebrating Yom Kippur?”

The eScapegoat project, which also includes appearances by a live goat tended by G-dcast members at California Jewish gatherings this summer, is funded by a \$50,000 grant from the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco. The mission of G-dcast, according to its website, is to provide easy, fun portals to Jewish learning.

G-dcast staff sends some of the most interesting and entertaining eScapegoat sins to a Twitter feed: @sinfulgoat

The vast majority of people who have used the site seem to be Jewish. But clearly some — with Twitter profiles that express love for Jesus, for ex-

ample — are not.

And though most of the sins posted are shared to amuse, some people take the site very seriously.

“At first I thought it was a comic kind of thing, and then I realized that even though some of the things seemed funny at first, they weren’t,” said Alexandria Constantino-Szeman, a novelist in New Mexico. For instance, she said,

people acknowledging how they tune out others.

Posting her own sin on the eScapegoat “felt good,” she said.

“I’ll basically be atoning for everything,” said Szeman, who chose to enter her full name on the site. “It’s just the state of affairs over here. I’ve more or less accepted this.”

Lefton said she was surprised many people seem to

be using the eScapegoat for serious atonement.

“The whole feel of the app is light and funny and we expected people to say, ‘Oh, ha, ha, this is light-hearted atonement,’” she said.

But she added, “If we’re giving people an outlet to reflect on this special time of year,” Lefton continued, “we think that’s awesome.”



Image from the front page of the eScapegoat web site. The site can be found at [www.escgoat.com](http://www.escgoat.com)

important player in the atonement ritual of the ancient Israelites, who symbolically placed their sins upon the animal and sent it into the wilderness.

Since its Aug. 8 debut, more than 7,900 people have submitted their sins to the interactive eScapegoat, the work of the non-profit San-Francisco-based G-dcast, which produces whimsical animated short films and mobile apps on the Hebrew Bible and Jewish holidays.

Mostly, they’re not the kind of transgressions that cause too much angst on Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, which begins on sunset on Sept. 13.

“Sometimes I hire a babysitter just so I can go read in my car,” reads one.

“Convenient for me, every Jewish holiday coincides with a major sporting event . . . and will until my boss catches on,” wrote another.



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# The Great Passion Play has a great future

## The Christian icon in Eureka Springs, AR continues to make a miraculous come-back after near financial failure in 2012

EUREKA SPRINGS, AR – The Great Passion Play in Eureka Springs is an American Christian Icon. The not-for-profit ministry includes the CHRIST OF THE OZARKS -- the largest statue of Jesus in North America and the second largest in the world.

In October of last year it closed it's doors, was on the brink of bankruptcy, about to go into foreclosure. Randall Christy, Founder of the Gospel Station Network based in Ada Oklahoma heard of the dilemma and felt that God wanted him to get involved to help save the Passion Play. "When I heard that the great passion play was closed for good it was heart-breaking, and I felt compelled to try and save it," Christy said.

"On December 21st I went to Eureka Springs and met with the board of the Passion Play and the bank that held their mortgage and worked out a deal to save the Passion Play and accept responsibility for their operations and direction."

The catch was the bank wanted \$75,000 by Jan 1st, 2013 -- only ten days away -- in order to stop to the foreclosure.

Ten days later, with the help of dozens of donors from sever-

al states, including many from the Ada area, they presented the bank with the money.

Christie sent out an appeal to the listeners of the Gospel Station Network, and other press outlets all over Arkansas also promoted the effort. People rallyed behind the cause.

People are still giving, -- and still working hard to save the Passion Play and to pay off the debt once and for all.

The Gospel Station Network (TheGospelStation.com) has partnered with the Passion Play -- working hard to preserve it for future generations. Tremendous strides have been made in the right direction in 2013.

On December 21 of 2012, we were told by the Passion Play lender that they would foreclose on Jan 1 unless \$75,000 was raised by that deadline. With God's help they did.

"It was a great blessing to see so many people from all over the U.S. donate to *Save the Passion Play*. Many of the donors sent heartfelt testimonials of how the Passion Play had changed their lives," Christy shared.

Additionally, The Gospel Station Network has donated over \$100,000 in promotional value to the Passion Play and Christy has been serving as the Passion Play CEO during the 2013 season.

According to Christy, "The Chief Administrator and I have been serving without compensation this year because we believe SO strongly in this effort to Save The Passion Play."



“Let the little children come to me.” The children enjoy interacting with ‘Jesus’ during a scene from The Great Passion Play. Photo courtesy The Great Passion Play.

Now they are working on ways to secure the financial future of The Great Passion Play, so this never happens again. Corporate underwriting, advertising, sponsorship, and major contributions are major ways to accomplish this.

Danny Hester is the Direc-

tor of Volunteerism at the Great Passion Play. Already, hundreds of volunteers have painted, repaired, improved and renovated the facilities and much more, contributing over \$250,000 in volunteer labor.

"We have, with the help of volunteer labor and donations of equipment, built an RV park for full time volunteers. Retired people who would like to serve in this ministry, can park their RV on Passion Play property, with free utilities, and work at the Passion Play throughout the season and even a few during the off season. These volunteers also get passes to most of the shows in Branson as part of our way of thanking them for their volunteerism," he said.

Christy explained their drive. "We believe our culture should NOT lose great Christian influences such as the Great Passion Play -- and we are looking for corporate partners and individual donors to secure it's future. There are many ways to be a part of this and many amazing aspects of the Great Passion Play, such as: The Holy Land Tour, The Bible Museum, The Sacred Art Center, The Great Hall Experience, and more."

The Play is on track to have an attendance of over 50,000 in 2013 -- with a goal of increasing to 100,000 by the 2014 season.

A major goal is to raise enough funds to permanently retire the debt of the Passion Play; which will be the key to securing it's financial future. The current debt is \$2.54 million. "Even though it's sometimes difficult to raise funds to pay off

debt -- we believe this is such a WORTHY cause -- and so many lives have been changed by the Passion Play -- that people will help us in this effort to retire the debt. We are confident that we will pay off this debt because, it's what the Lord wants," he said.

The Passion Play is doing well as the 2013 season progresses. According to Christy they have reduced expenses by 30% and attendance is up by 15-20%. All of their bills are paid, the bank payments are paid, and they are raising funds

Christy knows it is a big undertaking. "I know for a fact that I bit off more than I can

chew, but God is able! He's the one doing it, so there's no need to worry or doubt."

Did you experience doubts? "I doubt myself all the time, but I don't ever doubt God."

Other plans include building a fantastic petting park, with small animals for children, and a great children's play place, featuring more attractions for young children.

They also want to expand the Eastern Gate Marketplace, where crafters and artisans will be able to demonstrate their talents. They hope to have these two new aspects of the park completed in 2014. The cost to implement these new features

will be about \$125,000. These improvements will be funded by pursuing corporate and individual donors/sponsors who want to help add these features.

Christy sends a shout out to the people involved in helping him start the radio ministry. "I want to thank the people of the Ada area who helped The Gospel Station Network get started and have supported through the years, making this effort one of the fastest growing ministries in America today -- reaching millions daily with the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Information and narrative by Randall Christy, CEO of The Great Passion Play, with Steve Highlander, Managing Editor of the Real News - Review.



Standing seven stories tall, Christ of the Ozarks is the largest statue of Jesus in the United States and the second largest in the world. This icon has kept watch over Eureka Springs since the late 60's.

## Acts Television Network

Continued from page 9

Internet radio and television are the wave of the future. Cars are being manufactured with built in hot spots which will allow people to pick up their favorite internet radio stations in their vehicle.

More and more people are watching television on their

computers rather than on a television set. Movie makers are even releasing movies online. Best of all, with internet you do not have to worry about the limitations of towers.

This is also a tremendous opportunity for ministries as well. "The days of depending

on bake sales and car washes to raise funding are over," says Wining. Too many good ministries fail because they are under-funded. Not everyone is going to have either the heart or ability to support your ministry, but there are people out there who will. "The key is to reach out to a large enough number of people to find those who are willing and able to support your ministry," says Wining. If you are interested in seeing how easy it is to get your ministry on Internet Radio or TV just connect with Acts Media Group.

"We invite everyone to log on and enjoy ATN, a network like no other," he said. You may contact us at 417-294-3149 or acts.television@gmail.com.

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