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President and Publisher: Dr. T. D. Worthington
Editor: Tiffany W. Johnson
Advertising Director: Jeremy Worthington
Contributors: Tiffany Johnson, Glenn Mills,
Connie Peters, and Sherry Worthington
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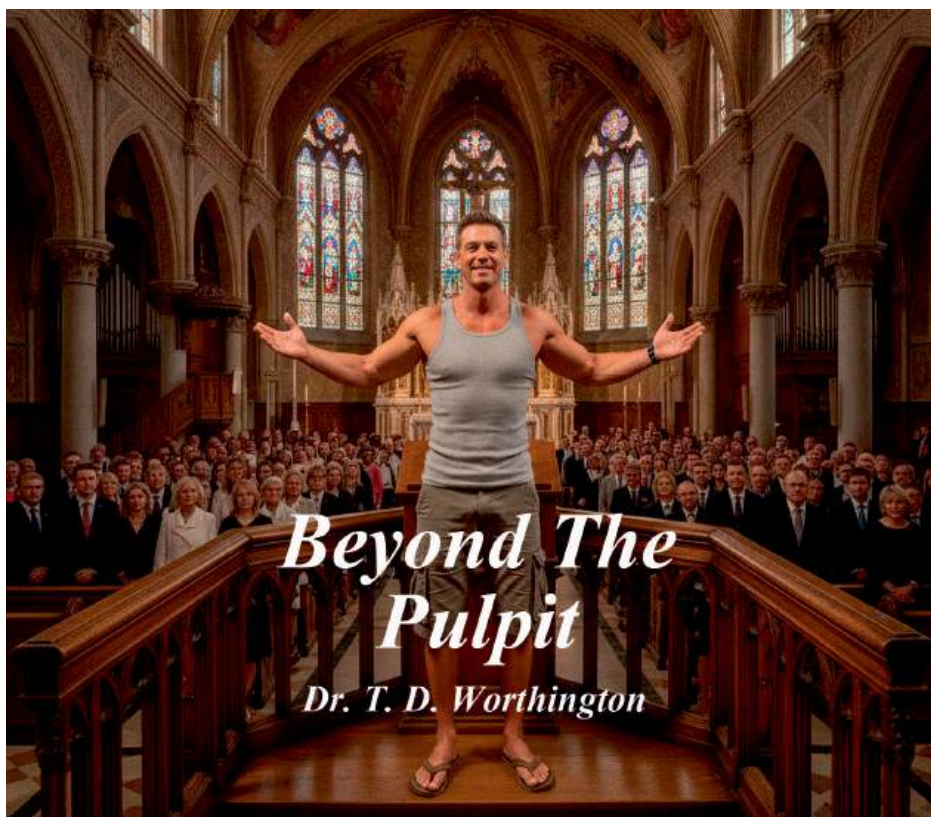
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“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

I Corinthians 10:31

The great man of God, Robert Murray McCheyne, once famously said, *“The greatest need of my people is my personal holiness.”* That is true of any leader in the service of Christ. I have lived long enough to see the role of a pastor greatly change over my lifetime. Assuming a church did not have other full-time ministries, such as a school or daycare, the pastor, along with his wife and perhaps a church secretary, usually handled most of the day-to-day activities of the ministry. One man could easily pastor 200-300 people with only volunteers to help with things such as music, youth work, outreach, visitation, and maintenance. Perhaps one reason for the shortage of pastors today is that a church of 300 people may have 5-6 pastors on staff. I am not judging that as

being wrong; I am just saying it is probably a factor.

My point is this: there was a time when everyone in the church considered one man to be their pastor and primary teacher. Of course, such a pastor would stay busy. He would prepare 3 or more messages a week; he might teach a Sunday School class; he would meet with first-time visitors, contact backsliders, and minister to the sick. He might also lead the choir and the music and play on the church softball team. He would likely conduct several funerals and weddings each month. Most evangelistic pastors had a radio program; some had daily programs that reached thousands of listeners each week. The point is, this one man ministered to a lot of people. For some, he would minister to them almost daily.

But now, things have changed. Most churches of that size, or even

smaller, have a much larger staff. We have full-time assistant pastors, youth pastors, outreach pastors, and music and worship leaders. We have full-time media people who help the church reach out online, but they still reach far fewer people than we used to on the radio. Please understand, I am not saying all this is bad. Lord knows, additional help can be a real asset. What I am saying is that the modern pastor has far fewer occasions to be a pastor. We’ve had young people at the academy who didn’t even know their senior pastor; the only minister they knew was their youth pastor. I have talked with adults who will not go to their pastor for counseling because they say they don’t really know him. Again, that may work out fine; I am just saying it is different.

Let’s add the fact that today, churches are holding fewer services. People used to see their pastors several times a week. Today, many churches just have one service. The net result is that many modern pastors have far less influence over their congregations than I did 50 years ago. Pastors have fewer opportunities to pastor, and that brings me to my message.

I totally understand that the ministry of effective pastors has never rested on a few words from the pulpit; however, in today’s church environment, we must do more. If the public is not coming to us, we must find new ways to live the Gospel message out in public. We must seek new ideas to pour our lives out in ministry to those whom God has sent us. We must model Christianity in our lives, in our everyday conversations, and in our dealings with the public.

When we look at Jesus, we find that formal and programmed teaching services accounted for only a small percentage of His teaching ministry. Much of His teaching took place while walking with His disciples and ministering to people He met in the normal course of life. He taught as life happened. However, all those little moments were not little at all. Each one would fit meaningfully into the message our Lord was trying to deliver. Every meeting, every conversation, every quiet minute that Jesus had with someone declared His character and revealed His message.

As pastors, fewer people are hearing our words, and those who do are hearing them less often, so we must give them the opportunity to see faith in our actions. What you say is important, don't misunderstand me, but since you are saying less in front of far fewer people, the way you behave in public might mean more. There is never a time when a pastor is not a pastor. You cannot clock out and set aside your calling at the end of the day. Being a pastor isn't just a job; it's who a person is. When God calls someone to be a pastor, He gives them a shepherd's heart. He is a pastor all the time. It's what he thinks about, what he lives for, and his purpose on earth. It's not possible for him to go home at the end of the day and leave his work behind, as most people can. It is an all-consuming task.

The pastor is on duty twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. He often receives phone calls from morning to evening, and sometimes even in the middle of the night. Most of his home activities are

related to the church. Most social calls or relationships are church-related. A large percentage of his conversations with his family involve the church.

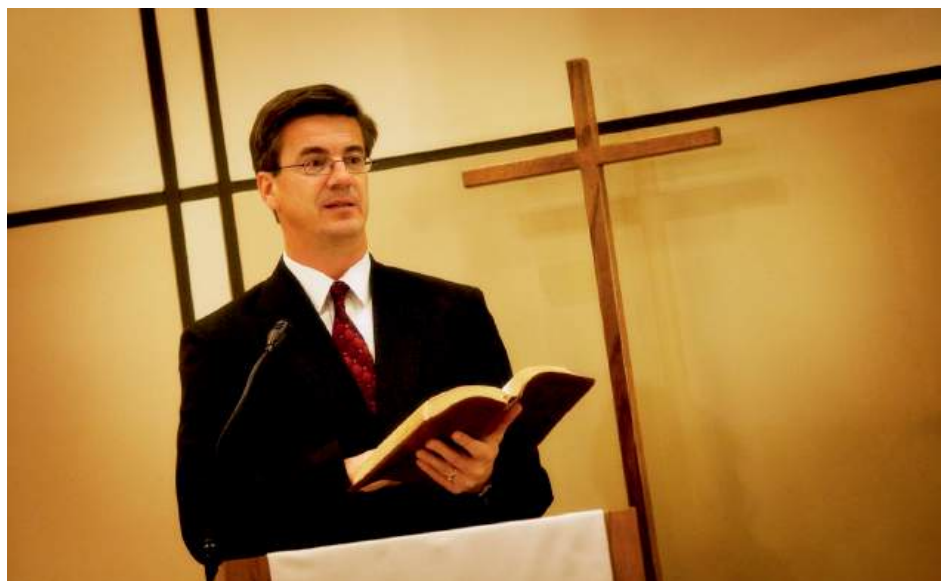
I've never claimed to be a great preacher; however, I believe we should have some of the greatest Bible teachers in church history filling our pulpits today. During the last days, the Bible teaches us that a greater illumination of Scripture will be available. Add to that the fact that pastors prepare only one or two sermons a week, so they should have plenty of time to study. Add to that the fact that they often have several other pastors on staff. Add to that having a vast online library of Bible study aids at their disposal. The trouble is, I am having a hard time finding all these great pastors and teachers.

Why is that? In part, it is because of the falling away. You can preach the greatest message since Pentecost, but if no one is willing to listen, it will not accomplish a lot. So, we can blame part of it on the hearers. However, my concern is that there has also been a falling away in the

pulpits. So many messages are feel-good and do not minister to people's needs. And why is that? Because in the modern church environment, pastors don't know their people.

Here is the message: these days, people watch more than they listen. Pastors teach by example, whether they hold the door for someone with a disability, argue with an umpire over a bad call, or stop to talk to a homeless person on the street. Pastors should never lower their guard in the name of authenticity or relaxation, only to act in ways that don't reflect their high calling. People learn from how we handle conflict. They learn from the way we handle our finances, from the way we maintain our yards and houses, from our personal appearance, from the way we dress in public, and from the way our children behave when they are young, and live after they become adults.

Pastors sometimes fail, just like everyone else, so people can even learn from how we handle failure, betrayal, false accusations, or personal sin. Scripture holds pastors





to a very high standard. **Titus 1** and **I Timothy 3** outline qualifications for a pastor. In **I Peter 5**, Peter exhorts pastors to be an example to their flock. Much is expected from a pastor's life; in many ways, their lives are to be observed closely.

So, let's tie it all together. In general, pastors have fewer opportunities to preach because churches are holding fewer services. Pastors often minister to fewer people because the ministry is divided among more leaders. Pastors usually reach fewer people because they rely on social media to get out their messages, often to a few hundred at best, when they used to reach tens of thousands on radio or television. Therefore, Pastors must understand two things.

Their constant personal testimony and the fullness of the Holy Spirit are essential. I consider these two together because they are connected. The day you lose your personal testimony is the day you lose your power and influence. If you lose one, you lose the other. There is no other way. Therefore, it is crucial for all pastors to be fully convinced that we must guard our walk with God and maintain the highest personal integrity.

That's why Paul emphasized these two areas when writing about the qualifications for pastoral work, saying, "*he must be above reproach.*" We must always be on our toes; at home, at the store, and pumping gas. We must not only act like men of God, but we must also look like men of God.

Have you noticed that most politicians dress up? Why is that? These people never do anything without a well-researched reason. Watch any newscast. The anchors are wearing suits and ties. Why is that? At the same time, visit a typical church, and you might be surprised to see that the guy who looks like an illegal immigrant who just crossed the border and has been hitchhiking in the rain for days is actually the pastor. I believe that at one point, the call for pastors to "*dress down*" was well-meaning. But in my antiquated, Jurassic-era mind-set, I think it has gone way too far. Suits and ties are not required and dressing casual certainly has its place. However, unless our Lord has prescribed a John the Baptist dress code for your ministry, I think looking sloppy and unkempt in the pulpit is disrespectful of your high calling. After all, you are preaching the Sacred Word of God.

Since when do preachers change their approach to appeal to the lost or the most carnal in the congregation? Since when do we allow the unchurched or the immature to set the direction for anything in the church? It's time for the preachers to look and act like the adults in the room. Stop following the kids and begin showing them proper respect for the Lord's house, the Lord's service, and the Lord's worship. It

seems to me that far too many of our young men are followers rather than leaders. They make decisions out of fear of standing alone, personal preferences, a desire to fit in with the world, or perhaps they are just too lazy to get dressed.

A few years ago, one of the budget start-up airlines had its cabin crew wear shorts and polo shirts. They encouraged them to be informal with passengers, thinking people would prefer an easygoing impression of the pilots. They were wrong. What passengers truly wanted from the crew was competence and professionalism. We do not want airline pilots wearing tank-tops and flip-flops. We don't want to see them moonwalking down the aisle or imitating Curly from the Three Stooges. We prefer seeing them act professionally and in uniform. It inspires confidence.

Inspiring confidence. That's what it's all about. Pastors have fewer opportunities to influence others through their words, so they must focus on demonstrating it through their lives. So here is the conclusion: for pastors and ministry leaders, most are preaching less often, and to even fewer people today, so your testimony *in and beyond* the pulpit is more important than ever.



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry for fifty years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries and Christian Bible College.



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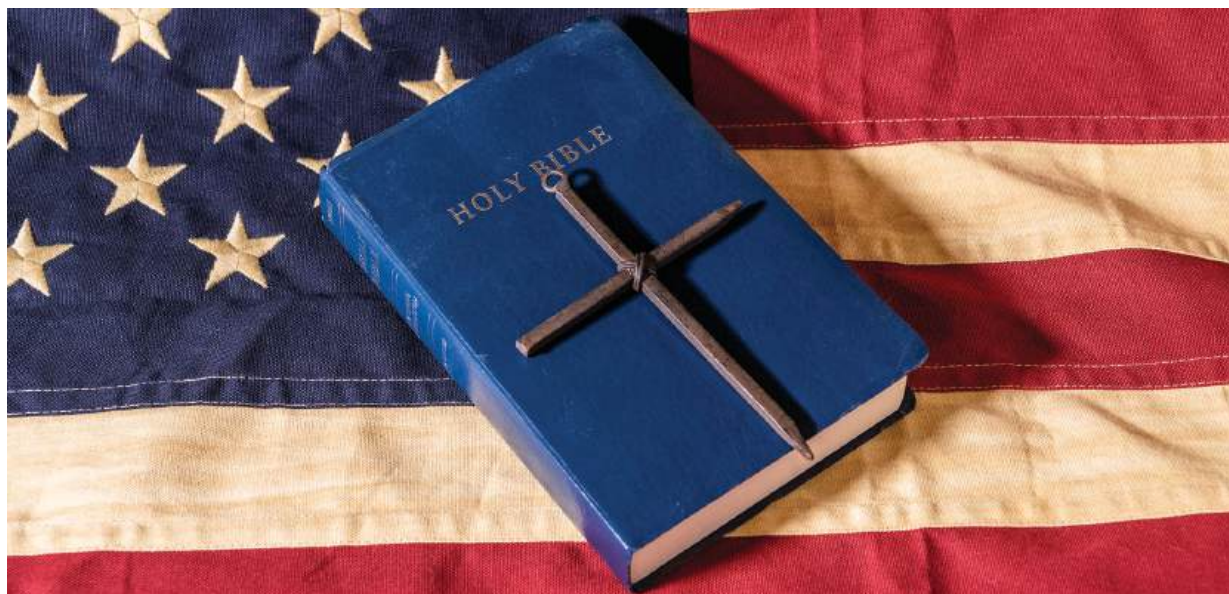
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"...in order to form a more perfect union." Our founders understood that America, even as initially chartered, was not a perfect union. Still, they laid the groundwork so the United States could gradually strive toward a more perfect union. They set us up to improve. However, in many ways, that progress does not seem to be happening.

Honestly, I don't think any country that hasn't gone through a revolution or a military defeat has ever strayed from its founding principles as quickly as the United States has in the last generation.

How can we get back to forming that more perfect union?

The answer is simple. Anything of value can only get better when God is added into the equation. A marriage becomes a more perfect union the more God gets involved. A business partnership becomes a more perfect union the more God gets involved. A friendship becomes a more perfect union, and yes, even a church becomes a more perfect union the more God gets involved. Thus, it is also true of our nation, and our founders knew it.

perhaps we are not becoming a more perfect union after all.

The only way we will ever change America's direction is by changing the hearts of Americans. The only way to change a person's heart is through their personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the Jesus who can forgive their sins and provide a completely new way of living. That is the message America needs, and we strive to share it every day at **GoMix Christian Radio**.



It is true that a society can persist for a long time along a path marked by an increasing gap between the values and ideals that legitimize it and the daily realities its citizens face. However, at some point, someone will realize that, despite our founders' sincere wishes and all the promises made by politicians,

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Be The **FIRST**

Dr. Sherry Worthington

I awoke this morning to the most beautiful music! The rain was coming down on our roof, and it was such a wonderful gift. In our area, it has been very dry, and many of us were praying for rain. I immediately thanked the Lord for His blessing.

If the plants could talk, I could only imagine what they would be saying as we drove home yesterday and saw the corn looking so pitiful. I could almost feel its pain. However, today tells a different story: now the animals, birds, and all of creation seem to be singing a beautiful song.

I love taking a ride in the country and admiring the beauty of our world. My husband and I enjoy taking the country roads when we get the opportunity. When I look at

the flowing fields, it takes me back in time, imagining a much simpler life. The farmers would be plowing with their mules, people would visit the community store, and we would communicate eye to eye instead of screen to screen.

When we get to town, reality hits, and I realize we are not in that world anymore. We cannot leave our houses and cars unlocked; we dare not walk the streets alone at night; a handshake is no longer binding; and even contracts are broken. America has many problems, but I do believe it is still the greatest place to live on earth.

One of the biggest problems I see in America is deception. It starts with our politicians and works its way down into our homes. When

you add trusting politicians in other countries to the mix, the issue becomes even more complicated. How can we possibly believe anything they say?

Wouldn't it be nice to watch the news and know the reporters were telling us the facts, not slanting them in any way? In days gone by, the reporters presented the facts; they were not commentators. The facts were presented, and you drew your own conclusions. I get discouraged watching the news because it is so contradictory. It also seems the commentators want to blast everyone they can and destroy the reputation of individuals, even if it is taken out of context or based on lies. We have a few reporters who appear to be trying to serve our country with the facts, but they are hard to find.

Our politicians don't help. The word politician seems synonymous with liar. Some appear to be doing what is best for our country, but others seem to desire to destroy it. I can only hope they think what they are doing is best, but I have to wonder. Are they intentionally trying to destroy America? Are they just looking to be elected and maintain power? It appears that way. As I reflect on this, I'm reminded of the contrasting examples set by our nation's early leaders.

I am sure that some politicians have been corrupt from the beginning of time. However, in early American history, most were patriots who sacrificed their lives and property for the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. Sadly, it seems that the balance has shifted, and I do not know of many politicians who would give as our founding fathers did. I wish today's politicians would be truthful.

However, many politicians in our country are admitting their political leanings, and we still vote for them. As a result, many Americans have become short-sighted and deceived themselves, failing to see the true dangers in front of us. How can we not realize that the road we are traveling on is filled with danger at every turn? This makes me worry about what the future holds for my grandchildren.

Deception in our country is rampant, but it is also an issue in our churches. We have churches that seek to follow God and reach others for Him, but we also have churches that cater to the masses and, unfortunately, don't stay true to the Word. *"For the time will*

come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables." **II Timothy 4:3-4.**

The people want preachers who say what makes them feel good and cater to their desires. As Christians, we should seek out churches that bring conviction and encourage us to grow in our walk with the Lord.



Probably the most serious lie of all is when we deceive ourselves. How often do we ignore the truth? When I lead devotions at school, I remind my students that we cannot grow as Christians if we cannot admit our own faults. Why do we have such a hard time seeing ourselves for what we really are? I am not talking about self-loathing, but we need to take a good, hard look at how we need to improve. Our Lord will be glad to illuminate us if we ask Him to. *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"* **Psalm 139:23-24.**

We must be ready when we ask God to reveal our hidden attitudes and motives. He will, and it will be painful. We may realize we are not as good as we think we are. As we seek God to show us our faults, we need to be willing to change and to rely on Him. Without God's intervention, we will continue to deceive ourselves. It is much easier to find the faults of others than it is our own. Have you ever noticed that the things that bother us about people are the things we need to fix in our own lives? Perhaps we need to spend more time looking within than without. If we let Jesus have His way in our lives, our criticism and negativity of others will disappear.

However, we must face problems without letting them control us. We should keep a positive outlook and demonstrate what Jesus can do in our lives. Do not be deceived!

Deception in our own personal lives is the most dangerous of all. As long as we are honest with ourselves, we will be better able to tackle deception in other parts of our world.

Our families, churches, and nation depend on us to improve! Will you take the first step?

Happy Birthday, America!



Dr. Worthington has five children and twelve grandchildren. She serves as Principal of Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.



“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:19

When we pray, there will almost always be two things on our minds - the things we need and the things we want or desire.

I was taught as a young Christian to write down the things I prayed for and check them off as God answered them, while giving Him thanks and praise. Often there would be a good amount of time between when I prayed about something and when it was answered. I found myself only occasionally thanking God for answering my prayers as they were being answered.

One morning while in prayer with Father, He challenged me with a question. *“How often do I answer prayer?”* He asked.

“It depends on how long it may take to line everything up,” I replied. I knew when we pray for certain things, it may take days, weeks, months, or even years to receive a full answer.

For example, you may ask God to help you get a promotion at your job. You have been faithful working unto the Lord. Then, God chooses to answer your prayer with that promotion. The process begins. It may be that the person in the position you desire must be promoted as well or your boss may have to open a new position. Maybe the thought of you must be placed on the mind and heart of the right person who will do the promoting. There are so many factors that may be involved just to have one prayer answered. However, when this prayer item is finally

answered, we give God thanks. Sadly, we only thank God when the prayer is completed, when we should be thanking Him daily that our prayers *are being* answered.

But that was not the main point God wanted me to understand. Again, the question was, *“How often do I answer prayer?”* The answer is **daily**. The difference is between our needs and our desires. As we see in the example, our desire prayers may take longer to answer, but our prayer needs are being answered every day. **Psalm 68:19** says, ***“Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.”***

We tend to focus on our wants and desires while taking for granted that God is daily meeting our needs. We focus on the promotion while forgetting to thank God for the job we currently have that is paying the bills. Or maybe we are focused on some type of illness or sickness when we forget to thank God in times when our health is good. It could be a ministry that we would like to see grow bigger while neglecting to thank God for the people He has already entrusted to us. There are the relationships we focus on while taking for granted the ones God daily blesses us with.

Yes, God answers prayers every day of our lives. Spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially, financially, and so on. Once we fully comprehend this fact it changes our level of appreciation and expectancy. God, in His loving patience, helped me to see His hand working on my behalf every day in some way to bless me. I am learning to stop looking for only the **big** answered prayers and to daily appreciate the many prayers God answers.

I spoke with a good friend who knows a lot about mining for minerals. He informed me that before men had better technology, they could easily overlook one mineral while digging for another. In one situation, a company found gold in the large pile of material they had been throwing away. The gold in the tailings was more valuable than the mineral they were mining. And so it is with our needs verses our wants and desires.

God's question has truly changed my way of thinking when it comes to prayer. Not only can I rejoice that God is meeting my daily needs, but in doing so His presence is continually with me. Thank You, Lord! I pray you will think about God's question as well. While being healed of a sickness is good, having great health every day is more valuable. Maybe a bigger house would be nice, but thank God we have a place we can call home today. Maybe we can't eat out at the finer restaurants, but thank God we have food on the table tonight. Maybe there are people we wish would love us, but thank God for the ones who do and that He loves us more than anyone ever could.

The list could go on of how we focus on our wants and desires while neglecting God is answering prayers daily. His presence is always with us and the more we acknowledge that He daily meets our needs, we also acknowledge His presence with us.



Dr. Glenn Mills is a long time supporter of GoMix Christian Radio and a full-time Evangelist with Glenn Mills Ministries. More information is available at www.glennmillsministries.com



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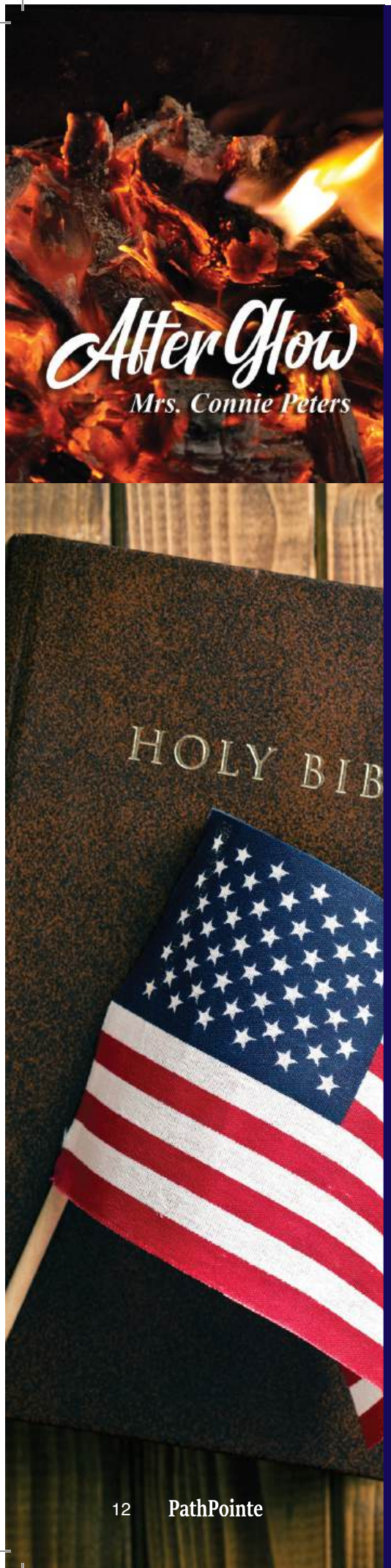
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Stop the Cycle

I can remember at least three events that brought Americans together with a focus on our God-given heritage and our dependence on Him as a nation. During our bicentennial celebration in 1976, several ministries joined to celebrate our country's survival and blessings as a nation under God. The Moral Majority organization was established as a force for morality. "I Love America" concerts were performed at each state's capitol building. The nation was united in acknowledging God's hand in our blessings. But over the course of time, we drifted away from depending upon God.

The second time that I saw a united dependence on God was immediately following the events of September 11, 2001. As a nation, we were brought to our knees in repentance and prayer. Although the events of that day were traumatic, the effects brought us back to God. Church attendance was up, and public prayer was common during those first days. But as our nation began to heal, we became more confident in our own power to overcome enemies without depending on God.

As we celebrate our 250th anniversary as a nation, we have seen that stirring toward repentance awaken again. Patriotism is rising again. We are recognizing that when we follow God in repentance and trust, He does bless our nation. As I write this, I am hopeful that our repentance will be a lasting one and that we will continue to recognize God's blessing on our nation. I hope that we will teach our children to have pride in our United States and to trust in God to preserve our nation. We need to avoid falling into the cycle of sin, failure, repentance, and a return to sin. We need to remain a nation that trusts in God.

When Benjamin Franklin was asked what kind of nation the founders had given us, he replied, "*A republic, if you can keep it.*" We now ask our God what kind of nation He will give us, and His response is found in **II Chronicles 7:14**.

"If my people...shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

He has promised national forgiveness and healing if we follow His commands. Ponder that!



Mrs. Connie Peters has two children and resides in Princeton, NC. Now retired, she formerly served as an instructor at Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.



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Nov. 28 - Dec. 19 Saturdays : Santa Experience

Nov. 27 - Dec. 19 Friday & Saturday : Turkey shoot

More events to be added!

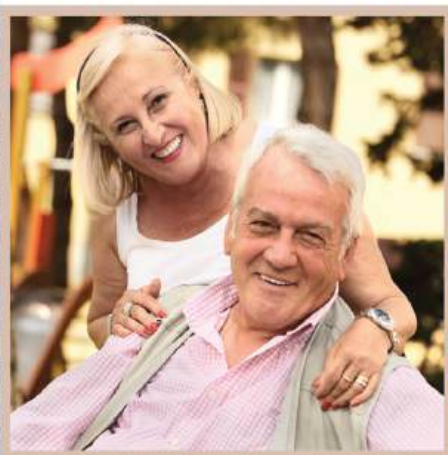


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