



# The 2016 Wilberforce Weekend

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Christian leadership in the spirit of  
William Wilberforce

**Promote**Good • **Resist**Evil • **Restore**Brokenness



John Stonestreet



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for Christian Worldview



# The 2016 Wilberforce Weekend: Restoring All Things

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The Wilberforce Weekend, sponsored by The Colson Center for Christian Worldview, is an annual gathering to equip Christians in Christian worldview and cultural renewal. Founded by the late Christian leader Chuck Colson, The Colson Center produces the popular daily commentary “BreakPoint” with John Stonestreet and Eric Metaxas, and equips Christian leaders through the Colson Fellows Program. ([www.breakpoint.org](http://www.breakpoint.org))

*This Special Report was prepared by The Washington Times Advocacy Department and  
The Colson Center for Christian Worldview*



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# God loveth “re” words



*There is not one thumb's width of the universe over which Christ does not declare: "Mine."*  
—Abraham Kuyper

## By John Stonestreet and Warren Cole Smith

There are a lot of “re” words in the Bible. Words like redemption, renew, repent, restore, resurrection, reconciliation and regeneration show up over and over throughout the Bible, especially the New Testament.

These “re” words have to do with returning something (a person, a relationship, a project, a universe) to its original, intended state. For example, the Scripture uses a word like reconcile to describe how the relationship between God and people is made right again. But it also uses that word to describe what we are to be doing in our daily lives. We are reconciled to become reconcilers (see 2 Corinthians 5:14-21).

And a word like redemption describes how Christ paid for the sins of the world. But it also describes the “already not yet” state of all things, secured by Christ’s resurrection and which will be realized when his kingdom comes in fullness to earth.

In other words, the most common “re” words in Scripture are more than just repetitive words used to assure us we are headed to heaven if we trust Christ. They are also summary words that describe the roles the church and individual Christians are to play in the overall story of the world. “Re” words flesh out for us the personal and cosmic impact of the work of Christ. Through them we learn more about who we are in Christ, as well as the future of the cosmos.

### We inhabit his world

The Bible is both the story of God and the true story of the world. The “re” words we find throughout the Scripture unlock, in all kinds of ways, the central plot of the grand story of God’s cosmos, from its beginning in Genesis to its new beginning in Revelation. It is the story of God’s creation of the world, of man’s rebellion against God, of God’s love and grace being so great that he sent his son to redeem us, and — the final chapter — that he is in the process of restoring all things to himself.

“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof,” proclaimed King David

(Psalm 24:1), but this is more than the psalmist’s adoring reflection. This is, in fact, the foundational fact of the Bible: God does not inhabit our world, we inhabit his world. From the very beginning of the story of redemption, this fact

livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (Genesis 1:26).

Don’t miss this very important point: The absolute ruler of everything decided to make other rulers to take care of his world. They are not puppets, nor have they been granted tourist visas in order to enjoy paradise. They have work to do.

We know where the story goes next. The first people fail at their task, futilely attempting to be their own masters and fatally attempting to remake reality. It doesn’t work, and the results are catastrophic, for them and for the world they were supposed to steward.

As a result, they are separated from God and from one another. Their responsibility for the creation isn’t removed, but it is frustrated by pain and toil. They are in need of rescue. They need to be reconciled to God and each other. And God does not abandon them. In Christ he fully and finally enters the humans’ story to make things right again.



is assumed. First, God brings the world into existence by his command, and then he brings humans into that world by his creative hand.

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” he said. “And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the

That’s where the “re” words come in. Christ redeems humanity from sin, reconciles us to God and one other, restores us to our full humanity, resurrects us from the death that our rebellion brings and promises to ultimately restore all things. The end of the story, as told in Revelation, is not really the end at all, is it? It

is, as C.S. Lewis so skillfully describes in “The Last Battle” of his Narnia series, a new beginning.

### Living our story

In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul identifies those who are in Christ as those who have been entrusted with “the message of reconciliation.” We are now “ambassadors” of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Let’s be clear on what that means.

First, we are ambassadors of the full redemptive work of Jesus Christ. This includes, but is also more than, the rescue of individual souls. The story, as told in Scripture, is the restoration of all things that culminates in the New Heavens and New Earth, when all wrongs will be made right again.

Second, we are not only saved from sin and death, but also saved to the life that God intended for his image bearers from the beginning. Humans were placed in the world to care for it, and though the fall frustrates our efforts, Christ restores that identity and calling. “Re” words are “again” words. They only truly make sense in light of God’s original intent.

So what does this look like in real life? We’d like to offer a guiding framework for “re” word living in the form of four questions that connect our actions with what we know to be true about the world from the biblical story:

1. What is good in our culture that we can promote, protect and celebrate? Christians believe that how God created the world was, in his own words, “good.” Even after the fall, much of this goodness, such as beauty, truth and human dignity, remains.
2. What is missing in our culture that we can creatively contribute? Christians believe that humans were created to be creative. When something good is missing in a particular time and place, we should find ways to offer it to the world. God is glorified, and the world is helped by properly ordered human creativity.
3. What is evil in our culture that we can stop? God hates evil, and so ought we. Throughout history courageous Christians have worked to stop that which destroys and deceives. We must do no less. It’s a basic requirement of loving our neighbors.
4. What is broken in our culture that we can restore? Ultimately, we reflect the Gospel most clearly when what has been damaged by sin is restored to God’s intended purposes.

*This article is condensed from the Introduction of “Restoring All Things: God’s Audacious Plan to Change the World through Everyday People,” by John Stonestreet and Warren Cole Smith. Copyright 2015 by Baker Books. Used with permission.*

# To handle today's 'cultural moment,' stand firm in the Gospel story

By John Stonestreet

I love Josh Bales' song based on the Lord's prayer, "Thy Kingdom Come." ... Do you feel like that in this cultural moment, that we know that the kingdom is coming?

We know because just a couple of weeks ago, we looked at each other in the eye — like generations of Christians have done since the beginning, like our brothers and sisters around the world, including the group of Christians in a park in Pakistan did that Sunday morning — and ... we said four words. What do we say to each other? "He is risen indeed."

We said this, and [yet] it's so hard to live as if that's not only true of our own individual spirituality but that's actually the truth about all of life and all of reality.

A couple of years ago I wrote a book with a friend of mine named Sean McDowell ... on same-sex marriage. ... I remember, as we were writing that book, a pastor looked at me in great despair and he said to me, "John, it's over. We've lost." ... He wasn't on the sidelines on this issue. He was in the middle of it in his state. He had led a miraculous, heroic effort that then got overturned by a judge.

And that's a question we asked about the culture: Have we lost? I'm going to say that that's a legitimate question to ask. ... But it's not the first question that Christians should ask about the culture.

The first questions that Christians should ask about the culture ... is this: What is our salvation for? ... As Christians we spend time talking about what our salvation is from. It's from sin, it's

from death, it's from judgment, amen. We talked about what our salvation is to — that it's to the glory of God, it's to eternal life, amen.

One of the most important things that Christians have to decide in any cultural context they are in is they have to decide to keep straight the story in the moment. ... We live in a cultural moment. ... Many of you have heard me say this over and over, and since we are remembering Chuck Colson this weekend, I want to bring it up again, something that Chuck used to say all the time, and that is this, that Christians are to be people of hope, right?

Here's how you know if you are keeping the story and the moment straight: If you are living from the moment, looking at the story, we are going to be characterized by a couple of different things.

First of all, we might be characterized by despair. We might have that attitude of that pastor that says, it's over, we've lost, there's nothing else we can do. We've got to hunker down. It's over. But as Richard John Neuhaus, one of Chuck's closest collaborators, used to say, despair is a sin because Christ has risen. Christians have not right to despair ... because Christ is risen.

There's [also] a lot of Christians today that are just characterized by outrage. I think you can see this in the political process right now. If you go back and look at my Facebook post from just two days ago about a Colorado school that is teaching transgender things to 4-year-olds, what you will see in the comments is an awful lot of outrage. And there's things in our culture that bring up an awful lot of outrage.

But as we are saying over and over

to each other, every time we talk about BreakPoint and we say, well, what do we want to talk about on the radio, how do we want to talk about it, we say this: Outrage is not a cultural strategy. I often think — when I think about Christians that are just stuck in outrage — of Jill Pole. You know Jill Pole in Prince Caspian, right? ... She loses Eustace over the cliff and she starts to cry, and C.S. Lewis says something really interesting there. He says crying is good for as long as it lasts, but once it's over, you still have to decide what to do. Isn't that the same thing with outrage?

Outrage is good while it lasts. It may have a purpose, but what do you do next? How are we going to engage next?

And a third thing I think will shape Christians if they are shaped by the moment and not by the story ... is fear. Just being afraid. Maybe so afraid that we think, "You know what, if we don't cave in on some of these issues that our culture cares so much about, if we don't cave in on some of these pelvic issues in particular, we are going to lose our voice in the culture." And out of fear, we capitulate.

I'm thankful for a line I read from a friend named Owen Strand, a theologian. He said this: God's truth does not get in the way of God's gospel. So as Christians, we don't stand in the moment and look at the story. We stand in the story and we look at the moment, like every other generation of Christians.

How can we live in this cultural moment from the perspective of the Gospel and not get the story and the moment mixed up? Four questions. Some of you have heard me give these questions, but

these are the questions that are framing our conference. First question is, what's good that we can champion? Christians have always made an enormous difference in the culture when we champion the good. Christians should be about truth. Christians should be about art and beauty.

Another part of championing the good is what's missing that we can add. For an impoverished nation, oftentimes the problem is not missing resources. It's missing access to the rule of law, missing access to the resources that are actually there. What's missing that we can contribute?

Number three, what is evil that we can stop? In fact, that's what Wilberforce did, isn't it? This is called the Wilberforce Weekend. What Wilberforce said is we should not have slavery after my lifetime. And he led a movement that changed the course of history.

And then the final question: What's broken that we can restore? As we go through tomorrow morning and even through tonight, we are going to be wrestling with these questions. We're going to try to live out of the cultural work and live out of the Gospel story and apply it to the cultural moment, and we are going to see what kind of a difference that makes.

.....  
*John Stonestreet is president of The Colson Center for Christian Worldview and a co-host of BreakPoint daily and weekly radio broadcasts. This excerpt is from his April 8, 2016, remarks at the Wilberforce Weekend in Arlington, Virginia.*

## Understanding God's mission

By Dr. Ed Stetzer

You've probably been sent on a mission before. For some, it could have simply been out to the store to get some ice cream. For others, it could have been to face a deadly enemy on foreign soil.

For Christians, we have been sent. Recognize that truth is significant, particularly in a culture that is rapidly shedding the remnants of its religious veneer. How do we live in this changing culture? That starts with understanding our being sent. We know Christians are sent because Jesus says so in John 20:21. He told His followers, "As the Father has

sent me, so send I you."

That immediately raises the question: What do we know about this mission on which Jesus has sent His followers?

First, we must keep in mind that God is the source of the Christian's mission. Our sending God is a sovereign God. Looking at our current situation, followers of Jesus can rest in the fact that this cultural moment is not a surprise to the One who has sent us into this culture.

God has sent us on mission in this specific time and place. Just as Isaiah did in Isaiah 6, when we say, "Here I am, Lord," we are asking God to send us to this moment, in this situation, in this

challenging time.

So when we discuss our mission, everything else should be framed by our knowledge of the God who sent us. The situation of the world is not a surprise to a holy, loving, sovereign God. He's not shocked or stunned by this moment. Knowing that He is an all-knowing and all-loving Creator should give us peace and encouragement to embrace this mission.

Second, after understanding who the Sender is, we should pay attention to where we are being sent.

» see **STETZER** | C6





# Hannah More, the ‘female’ Wilberforce



By Dr. Karen Swallow Prior

If you are like most people, you perhaps have never heard of Hannah More, so don't feel bad. When you're done hearing my very short discussion about her and her legacy, and why she is often called the female Wilberforce, you might, like me, come to think of Wilberforce as the female More.

Let me just tell you a little bit about her life and what we can learn from her. As the subtitle of my book suggests, she was a poet, reformer and abolitionist, and I will briefly go through those things and the structure of her life.

The first phase of her life found Hannah More quite a celebrated writer, moving among the literary elite of London as a young woman ... in the middle to late 18th century. Some of her works now today ... appear in anthologies of romantic literature and minor women writers, so she still is remembered by

literary scholars.

But it wasn't long after she had spent these years in London when she read a book — it was published anonymously, actually — a book of letters from a clergyman to a number of people. The book was called “Cardiphonia, or The Utterance of the Heart,” and the author was John Newton. ... Most of us probably remember him as the former slave ship captain and the author of the hymn “Amazing Grace,” and also the mentor to William Wilberforce, the one who actually encouraged Wilberforce upon his conversion not to leave public life but to maintain his public work in Parliament and to do ministry there.

After reading Newton's work, [Hannah More] really became disenchanted with the fashionable life in the city and withdrew to the country. There she met up with Newton in person and also with William Wilberforce and a number of other evangelicals who formed a group called the Clapham Sect. These are people who not only fought the slave trade ... but they enacted reforms throughout all of society.

All of the things that More herself was involved in — and this is what is really unique about her and why I think she is worthy of being rediscovered — made her one of the rare people in this highly stratified culture, highly divided by class, gender and race, uniquely poised to reach everyone in her society.

She first wrote, as I mentioned, works that were received by the literary elite, and celebrated and

applauded. ... But she left all that behind after being convicted to live a life for the Lord. So she began writing treatises, heavy books aimed to the wealthy and the powerful and elite, encouraging them, exhorting them and inspiring them to live not just nominally religious lives but to live devout lives. These books were best-sellers. Even royalty read the books and were influenced by them. The Queen actually said that she was convicted to let her hairdresser off on Sundays so she could observe the Sabbath.

So More wrote first to the upper class and she convicted them, and she wrote also to the growing middle class. ... The novel was developing as a popular form of literature and read by the masses, and so she wrote a novel for them that extolled a biblical view of marriage and of education.

She opened a number of Sunday schools out in the countryside in the west of England, where she lived. Those of you who know about the Sunday school movement know that Sunday schools then were not what they are now. They were actually schools, elementary schools held on Sunday for the poor because Sunday was the only day they didn't work. Even the children worked six days a week.

More opened these schools and taught the poor to read, which was considered very radical and revolutionary. ... She taught the poor to read because she wanted them to be able to read the Bible. She wanted them to be able to learn the catechism and repeat it. She taught the poor employable

skills so they could get out of the mines and out of the dangerous work that they were doing and out of the grinding poverty that they lived in.

Not only did she try with her friends in the evangelical movement to reform the wealthy, to instruct the middle class and to elevate the lives of the poor, but she even cared about animals.

Animals in that time were considered, as a result of Enlightenment thinking and the disciples of Descartes — who believed that animals were just simply machines to be experimented on alive — to be used as entertainment and to be viciously treated until their short, brutish lives were ended. But More and Wilberforce and their evangelical friends ... promote[d] animal welfare. More did so in her tracts. Wilberforce did so by being one of the founding members of the British Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. We have a counterpart here in America today.

During all of these years — which covered decades, where they were doing all of this work, reforming society from high to low — they were also fighting the slave trade. This is what they are most known for, and the reason I am spending the least time talking about that tonight is because it's important that we learn from the lives who went before us about how they were not single-issue activists. They were Christians who understood that the application of the Gospel

» see **PRIOR** | **C7**

## STETZER

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In the Christian understanding of this world, there is great beauty to be observed and which points to its Creator. Psalm 19:1-2 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky proclaims the work of His hands.” Creation exists to bring glory to God, but that's not the complete story for the Christian.

We believe God created this world and called it “very good,” but sin entered the world and that sin has consequences. That sin shaped a world that is broken and lost.

By broken, we mean that the impact of that decision stains everything. Nothing in this world can escape being tainted by sin. But more than that, creation is also lost. There is something that needs to be found, a reconnection that must take place, a reconciliation that needs to be made. That leads us to the next point.

Third, we should recognize that God's mission has a purpose.

There are not many things worse than not having purpose. But the Christian has been given a mission with a definite purpose. Jesus came to save the lost and serve the hurting. We are to join Him in that mission.

The Christian Gospel message is one that proclaims Jesus conquered sin through His death on the cross and rose three days later to conquer death itself. Gospel means good news, and that message is one of love and hope and purpose.

This is not merely news to talk about inside the four walls of a church. This is a proclamation to be made in neighborhoods and communities, towns and cities, states and nations. Because it is the good news of the rightful King coming back to rule His creation and make everything right in the end.

To establish His kingdom, Christ started the church. Whether it is a historic church in the United Kingdom, a house church in China, a megachurch in South Korea or an average church in America, each congregation is part of God's kingdom and plays a role in its

expansion. But one day that growth will be complete.

Finally, Christians should never forget that God's mission will be completed, even while many Christians claim the sky is falling.

As executive director of LifeWay Research, I see much of the statistical data about Christianity in the U.S. I also see many of the fear-based interpretations of the data. In reality, the percentage of people who call themselves Christians and order their lives around that has not changed dramatically in decades.

We have seen, however, a significant decline in the number of nominal Christians. Those who never go to church — but check “Christian” on a survey — no longer feel compelled to select a religion. Nominal Christians are shedding their religious label and becoming the “Nones” — the unaffiliated who choose “None” on a religious survey.

Those with a loose affiliation to Christianity are also shedding that label. This is not the crisis many make it out to be, but it is significant. The sky is not falling, but most certainly the ground is

shifting.

In the midst of these cultural shifts, it is important to remember that Christians believe Christ will bring His mission to a completion. Even as many paint a bleak picture, Jesus is still on the move. His kingdom is still advancing. His mission is still secure.

Until the moment God's mission is complete, however, Christians are to continue pursuing its end. We are called to be good citizens and loving neighbors, seeking to uplift the welfare of our community and our nation. That mission is for God's glory and our good. And it's much more important than going out for ice cream.

.....  
*Ed Stetzer, Ph.D., is executive director of LifeWay Research and co-host of “Break-Point This Week” with John Stonestreet. Mr. Stetzer is also a contributing editor to Christianity Today magazine and executive editor of Facts & Trends, a magazine for church leaders. This article is derived from his April 8 remarks at the Wilberforce Weekend in Arlington, Virginia.*

# Christian communities offer 'ballast' against 'violence, radicalism, insanity'



By Dr. Gregory Alan Thornbury

If you read Jeremiah 29:11, every high school yearbook has, "I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans to prosper you, to give you a future and a hope," right? We all remember that verse. What's the context of it? Seek the good of the city. Where were those exiles? Babylon.

Historically, Christians have gone to the center of the empire ... that's where Christians ought to be. We ought to flee to where culture is created, plant and stay firm, and be shining lights in the firmament as we hold forth the word of life.

This is, I think, what this whole conference is about: It's what the Wilberforce legacy is about, that we cannot give into an "Eeyore" worldview ... the outrage culture, the we-have-lost culture. I call it the Eeyore worldview: "The culture is dying. I can't find my tail." ... I have to tell you, this has never characterized the people of God, who have gone into these dark places.

Europe is advanced in its decay as a cut-flower civilization, far advanced from where we are in America, where there is still this vestigial memory of Christian things.

Europe is now so far gone that some of the leading atheist philosophers of the continent are now saying to the Christian community, "Please don't

change. Go back to being orthodox. Go back to being really Christian." ... It is dawning on them that even though they don't want to be Christians, they understand that the Christian community historically has always been a ballast against violence and radicalism and insanity.

Isn't that exactly what Dietrich Bonhoeffer said in "Life Together," where he said, where was Jesus when he did this great work of atonement on the cross ... ? He was in the middle of his worst enemies. And so Bonhoeffer says in "Life Together," the place for a Christian to be is not in the seclusion of a cloistered life, the holy huddle, our little bubbles. But he said it's to be in the center of the city, in the thick of its foes.

That gives us a lot of freedom to just let our flag fly for Jesus. I think about the line that is in the unpublished original preface to George Orwell's "Animal Farm." It was re-released in 1972. They included this, but in the original in 1945, it was not there. He said, "What good is liberty for if it is not to tell people stuff that they don't want to hear?" Hey, that's good news for us, because we are telling people a lot of things that they don't want to hear.

One of the most popular intellectual rock stars in all of Europe ... is Gianni Vattimo. He is an Italian philosopher. He is an atheist who is also a Catholic. ... He says things that don't make sense to us, like, I'm a Catholic who embraces the death of God. And he took Saint Anselm's famous statement, *crede ut intelligas* or "I believe in order to understand," and rebranded it as *credere di credere*, which means "I believe that I believe."

What I fear is that the Christian community ... [has] sort of adopted that posture and stance of soft thought. We only want to talk about the things that are comfortable for us to talk about.

What's ironic is that people like Gianni Vattimo and his conversation

partner in a famous book a couple of years ago, Rene Girard, said ... free markets, democracy, enlightenment and holding back the tide of violence is thanks to Christianity. If you guys go bye-bye, the rest of us atheists are in a lot of trouble.

Slavoj Zizek is a leading philosopher from Slovenia ... [and] an apologetic, Marxist, atheist philosopher who has become very chatty about the importance of Christianity for the life of Europe. ... After reading G.K. Chesterton's famous book, "Orthodoxy," ... [Mr. Zizek concluded] that the atheist radical universe, deprived of religious reference, is the gray universe of egalitarian terror and tyranny.

Wow. So what is the message here? It's instead of leaning back, it's lean in and confess the things that only we can confess. And this is all encapsulated by the theory of a man who really changed the world. If you want to know where relativism comes from, it comes from a 19th century German philosopher named Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and he gave this worldview, saying that cultures developed in these moments of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. ... Marx said, what is the thesis? Capitalism. What is the antithesis? Revolution. What is the synthesis? Communism.

Now Hegel said each era stands on its own. The wings of Minerva only spread at dusk. We don't know until the end of an era whether or not what happened in that era was good or bad because we have the benefit of hindsight at that point.

But there is a missing step in that traditional presentation. After the antithesis, Hegel says, there has to be something called the "negation of negation." And what is the negation of negation? You know what Zizek says? The perfect example of the negation of negation is the cross.

In the ancient Roman world, the cross was regarded as the political tool of oppression of suppressed people by the Roman government, and by dying

on the cross and forgiving the sins of the world, Jesus negates the terrible negation of that political domination of the cross and reverses the story, and now the cross becomes a positive thing.

We have to be the new negation of negation. We have to be OK in saying no. William F. Buckley Jr., famously defined conservatism as standing athwart history and yelling, "Stop!" What is Christianity? Christianity is standing athwart culture and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand."

Let me close with a nod to another famous theorist. Her name is Hannah Arendt. She was a Jewish philosopher who wrote the book "The Origins of Totalitarianism." She talked about how the Jewish people have survived millennia of persecution and Holocaust, and she said what makes them different is that they know that they are a pariah in a culture. And they embrace being the pariah.

No, the cool kids aren't going to like you, but by being a conscious pariah, the Jewish people historically have risen to heights that other ethnicities and races can't match pound for pound and proportionally.

So maybe it's time for us to be OK with thinking of ourselves as the conscious pariah. ... Paul writing to Titus, says, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passion and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age while we wait for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and savior, Jesus Christ."

.....  
Gregory Alan Thornbury, Ph.D., is the president of the King's College in New York City. He is the founding dean of the School of Theology and Missions at Union University in Tennessee. This excerpt is from his April 8, 2016, remarks at the Wilberforce Weekend in Arlington, Virginia.

## PRIOR

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throughout all of society can lead to flourishing for everyone.

So they worked on all of these issues simultaneously. We know from history how long it took them to accomplish some of these feats. It wasn't until after working for decades, in 1807 finally England abolished the slave trade. And it wasn't until 1833, several

weeks after the deaths of Wilberforce and several weeks before the death of Hannah More, that the last slaves in the British Empire were freed. This was decadeslong work, and the entire time they were working on issues that affected every level of society. Talk about restoring the culture and having a vision for everyone!

So when we study the life of someone like Hannah More — and again, I'm sure most of you have never heard of, and I had not heard of, her until I

stumbled across her name in a dusty book doing doctoral research — we find that church history is filled with saints like these who went before us. And we don't have to know all their names, and we don't have to expect our names to be remembered, but we can expect that because we are doing the work of Jesus Christ and [it is because we are] guided by his spirit that we can be part of movements that will change the world forever and ever, just as these saints who went before change

the world for us.

.....  
Karen Swallow Prior, Ph.D., is a professor of English at Liberty University and specializes in 18th century English literature. She is the author of "Fierce Convictions: The Extraordinary Life of Hannah More, Poet, Reformer Abolitionist" (Thomas Nelson, 2014). This excerpt is from her April 8, 2016, remarks at the Wilberforce Weekend in Arlington, Virginia.



# Museum of the Bible beckons all to ‘come and see’



**By Steve Green**

Since the day I was born, the Bible has played a significant role in my life. My parents taught me to love it, to cherish its principles, and to apply them to everything I did.

Years ago, I committed to reading the Bible every day, and I’ve found it to be constantly fresh, constantly relevant and constantly inspiring. This Book has helped me be a better son, father, husband, businessman, and taught me the principles at the heart of how I work and live.

Today, I am thrilled to serve as chairman of Museum of the Bible, a nonprofit organization with the mission to invite all people to engage with the Bible.

So how exactly are we inviting people to engage with the Bible? Through what we call our “Four Pillars”: the museum itself, traveling exhibits, education and research.

In addition to being our nation’s capital, with four of the top five of America’s most attended museums, Washington, D.C., is easily the museum capital of America.

The Bible’s words are chiseled onto many of its monuments and important buildings. That’s why we decided to put all 430,000 square feet of the new museum there. Set to open in November 2017, and only a few blocks from the Capitol, the National Mall and the Smithsonian, we’ll be able to host millions of visitors who, once inside, will be immersed in the history, narrative and impact of the Bible.

Recently, we’ve seen a tragic decline in Biblical literacy in our country. The average person on the street in all likelihood has no idea just how much the Bible has impacted their life, including the role it played in inspiring the very liberty they cherish today. And yet, as *LIFE* magazine once declared, the printing of the Bible by Gutenberg in 1455 was the most important historical event of the last 1,000 years.

Bridging that awareness gap is exactly why the museum will include an

Impact Floor that highlights the Bible’s influence on topics such as government, music, education and human rights; a Narrative Floor that will portray the Bible’s iconic stories in unforgettable ways for both young and old; and a History Floor that will showcase the museum’s most prized artifacts, as well as pieces from museums around the world.

It is true that this Book has sometimes been abused, and we won’t be shying away from that fact. Nonetheless, I have always believed that when its principles have been applied, mankind has been the beneficiary.

In all of this, our goal is straightforward: invite all people to engage with the Bible in a scholarly, immersive manner, and let the visitors come to their own conclusions.

But engaging people with the Bible won’t just be limited to Washington. We’ve taken our extensive collection global through our Traveling Exhibits program, and will continue to do so. Whether it be the Vatican, Cuba, Israel or other countries around the world (including six different cities right here at home), we’ve already attracted over half a million visitors worldwide.

We’re also engaged in Bible education efforts. As part of our student Bible curriculum, and in collaboration with Israeli colleagues, we’ve developed “Augmented Reality” technology to create a totally new form of interactive textbook that quite literally brings the Bible to life on devices, such as iPads and other tablets.

The first part of our academically rigorous, tech-savvy curriculum has

most renowned scholars of our time, but also enables qualified and promising young scholars to be mentored as well. In doing so, we hope to encourage a whole new generation of Biblical scholars.

Through our four pillars, the Museum of the Bible is quite literally sponsoring a worldwide collaborative effort to engage people with the history, narrative and impact of the Bible.

Founding this institution has been the most fulfilling work of my life precisely because it is so much bigger than me. It is an organization that invites people to engage with a Book whose influence is seen in our art, heard in our music, chiseled on our buildings, and which inspired our greatest heroes, and gave us our highest values — a Book



Our approach reflects the same religious liberty the Bible has helped to inspire. The museum will be a place where people of all faiths, and those of no faith at all, are welcome. We’ve even negotiated a number of historic partnership agreements, like the one with the Israel Antiquities Authority, allowing visiting museums and libraries to have permanent exhibit space at the museum in Washington.

been introduced in various schools in Israel as a supplemental course. According to surveys, their students consistently say it is one of their favorite courses. We’ve also introduced a similar curriculum to the American home-school market just last month.

Finally, through our Scholars Initiative, we are sponsoring numerous Biblical research and scholarship projects, which not only include some of the

that is bigger than all of us: the Bible.

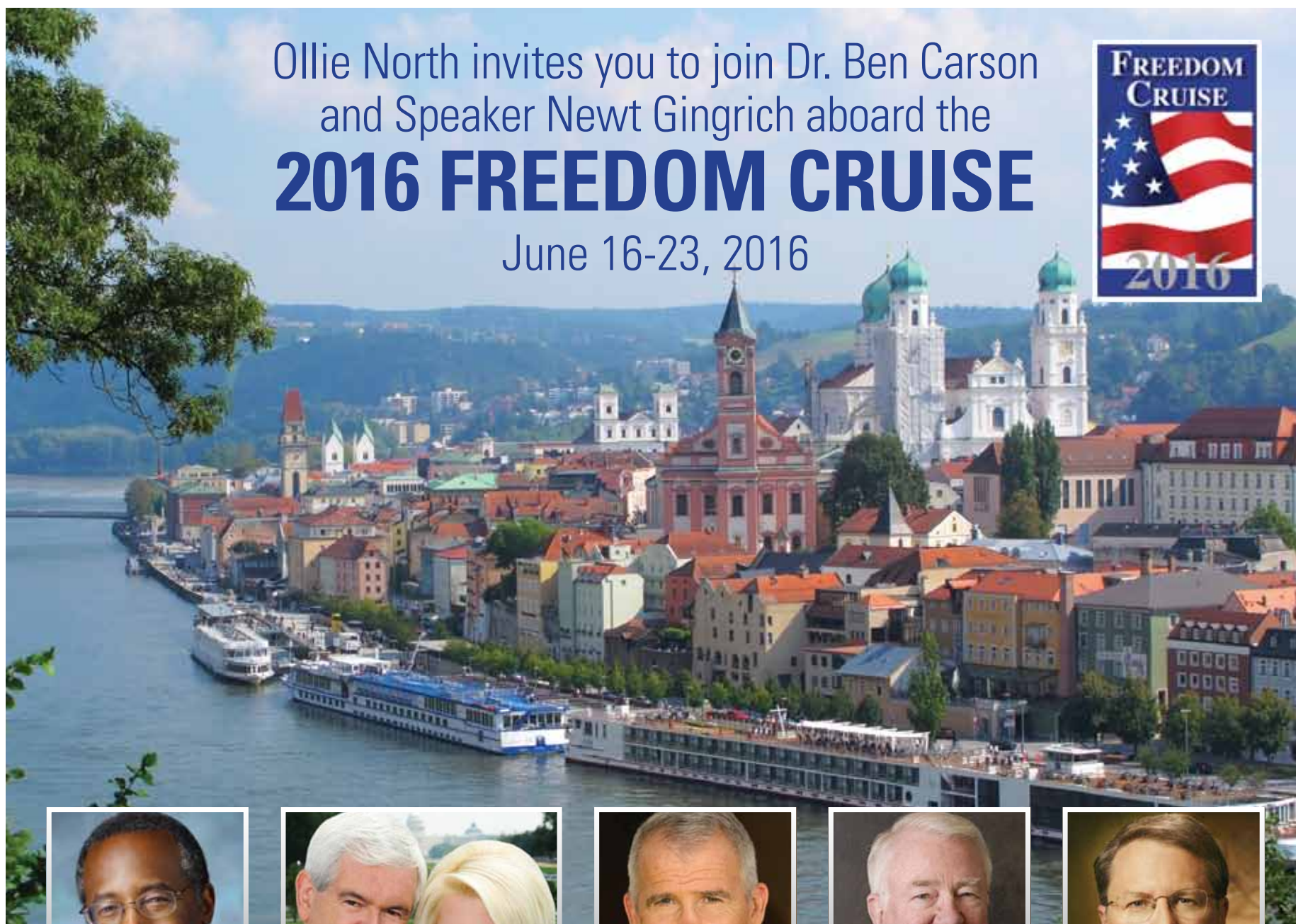
Just as the disciples some 2,000 years ago said to the curious of their own day, so we say today: “Come and see.”

.....  
Steve Green is chairman of the Museum of the Bible ([www.museumofthebible.org](http://www.museumofthebible.org)). He also serves as president of Hobby Lobby, the world’s largest privately owned arts and crafts retailer.



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# Exposing inhumane, coercive population control



**By Reggie Littlejohn**

I am president of Women's Rights Without Frontiers. Our mission is to end forced abortion and the sex-selective abortion of baby girls in China.

Although WRWF is not a religious organization, on a personal level, I am always guided by two Scriptures: Psalms 94:16 says, "Who will rise up for me against the wicked? Who will take a stand for me against evildoers?"

And Ephesians 5:11, which says: "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them."

Yes, the "one-child" policy has now moved to the "two-child" policy, but it is still an inhumane example of coercive population control.

As blind activist Chen Guangcheng succinctly tweeted last year when the policy was changed, "This is nothing to be happy about. First the #CCP would kill any baby after one. Now they will kill any baby after two. #ChinaOneChildPolicy"

Any and all babies born out of wedlock — to unmarried women — are automatically considered illegal and are subject to forced abortion.

And given the cultural bias toward boys, second children who are daughters are especially vulnerable to being aborted.

The horrible practice of forced abortion in China is why I founded Women's Rights Without Frontiers.

This is about fighting China's "war on women and girls." To understand

the suffering caused by forced abortion in China, watch our short video, "Stop Forced Abortion — China's War on Women" ([WomensRightsWithoutFrontiers.org/?nav=stop-forced-abortion](http://WomensRightsWithoutFrontiers.org/?nav=stop-forced-abortion)).

China has an iron grip over the wombs of women. The Chinese Communist Party intrudes into the bedrooms and between the sheets of the families in China by requiring ultrasound checks to make sure women's IUDs are still in place and paying informants who monitor women's reproductive health.

The problem with the one-child policy or the two-child policy lies not

certain circumstances, sterilize her — because she does not possess government approval.

Consider the scale of this atrocity: Since the Roe v. Wade decision in 1973, some 55 million American children have been lost through abortion. Since China enforced the one-child policy in 1980, the Chinese Communist Party boasts that it has "prevented" more than 400 million lives. That number is more than the populations of the United States and Canada combined. The Chinese Communist Party has not released a statistic indicating how many of these abortions



give birth to her daughter.

More than 200 million girls are missing (due to abortion and trafficking), which is more than the lives lost from all the wars of the 20th century. In fact, what is taking place is "gendercide."

Let's take a look at this brief video from [ItsAGirlMovie.com](http://ItsAGirlMovie.com). It explains why the three deadliest words in some parts of the world are "It's a girl."

Women's Rights Without Frontiers now has boots on the ground in China to help rescue women who want to escape forced abortion and give birth to their babies. It's called the "Save a Girl" campaign. ([WomensRightsWithoutFrontiers.org/index.php?nav=end-gendercide-and-forced-abortion](http://WomensRightsWithoutFrontiers.org/index.php?nav=end-gendercide-and-forced-abortion)) Women's Rights Without Frontiers also rescued two beautiful refugees, the daughters from an imprisoned pro-democracy dissident from China, and are raising them as our own daughters. The younger one, Anni, is a straight-A student and recently won a piano competition to play in Carnegie Hall. Her mother was almost forced to abort her when she was around seven months pregnant. Anni is an example of the beauty and brilliance lost every day in China through forced abortion and gendercide.

I will end with Proverbs 24:11-12, which says, "Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, 'Behold, we did not know this,' does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not requite man according to his work?"

*Reggie Littlejohn is founder and president of Women's Rights Without Frontiers, an international coalition combating forced abortions, gendercide, sexual slavery and sex trafficking in China and other countries. She has testified about these issues many times before Congress, as well as European, British and Irish parliaments. This article is derived from her April 9 remarks to the Wilberforce Weekend in Arlington, Virginia.*

in the number of children allowed. The problem lies with the coercive enforcement of the birth limit, whatever that limit might be.

Whether a couple is allowed to have one child or two children, it is a human rights atrocity to drag a woman out of her home in the middle of the night, screaming and pleading, to forcibly abort her pregnancy — and under

were forced.

Due to the sex-selection abortion trend in China, the current ratio of boys to girls is 117 boys to 100 girls. Gendercide exists in India, as well.

Between these two giant countries, one-third of the world's women are dealing with a situation in which they are culturally coerced to abort or abandon their baby girls. It is a woman's right to

## ISIS using new technology to commit medieval brutality



**By Johnnie Moore**

"Disruption" is a word of Silicon Valley currency. It's a word we use to describe an unexpected agitation of some age-old idea, a dislodging of a cog in the old system. It's primarily a technological term envisioning massive change in a short period of time with exponential results. A true disruption can shake generations on each side of it. It can rattle all that everyone knew and establish a new norm.

While there is something very old about ISIS, with its medieval brutality, I believe ISIS has disrupted terrorism in three distinct ways: technologically, tactically and theologically.

Technologically, ISIS has leveraged the Internet to outsource training, and connect and inspire an astonishing number of terrorist sympathizers. In the height of the ISIS ascent in 2014, as many as one out of five — 21.4 percent, to be precise — tweets in the United States with the acronym "ISIS" were in support

of ISIS, according to the University of Milan's Voices from the Blogs.

That percentage was roughly equivalent to those seen in the United Kingdom and France. Yes, it was considerably less than the outsize percentages of ISIS-supportive tweets in Belgium and Qatar, but — believe it or not — it was more than that in Saudi Arabia.

Also, al Qaeda had a hard enough time finding potential terrorists, and

» see **MOORE** | C12



# Resist sin, and fearlessly radiate the love and life of Christ



**By Frederica Mathewes-Green**

If our faith is going to be increasingly mocked and rejected, it will negatively affect our ability to speak in the public square. What we say will be distorted or ridiculed. Communication will be difficult.

So we'll need to put more emphasis on connecting one to one, person to person. Not just learning how to talk cleverly about our faith, but actually living it in ways that other people can see.

The early Christians did this during the Roman persecution; they lived in ways different from their neighbors, and the church grew.

Like them, we're going to need to let the light of Christ within us shine out.

At present, American Christians are not notably shiny. Our lives don't look much different from those of the world. Well, it hardly seems worth it to try. Since everyone is forbidden to have an opinion about anyone else, why bother with anything morally challenging?

Advertising catechizes us, 24 hours a day, to prioritize comfort and amusement, and coaxes us to see our failings as excusable little foibles that we ought to indulge. In accepting those views, we've gotten out of step with our fellow Christians throughout time.

In talking about repentance, you have to talk about sin, and I wanted to recommend an understanding that is a little different, one that comes from my Eastern Orthodox tradition.

We don't see sin as being like breaking a rule. It's more organic than that, and more communal.

Sin is sickness. Though we're born innocent, we have a genetic weakness, so to speak, and catch the infection in time. And as we grow, we add our own sins to the world's store of misery.

So sin is infection, not infraction. It's like air pollution; it's something

that we all contribute to, and we all suffer from.

That's why resisting sin is important. That's why it has urgency. Our sins poison us and those we love, and add to the dysfunction of the world.

But it is possible to resist. With practice, you can gain victory over one sin after another. This is a lifelong process, but the results are increasingly visible as time goes by. Like physical therapy, it's a challenge, and sometimes it's painful — but it keeps making you stronger.

Our life on earth has a goal; we're not just waiting around to go to heaven. We were created to be filled with the presence of God — like the Burning Bush was filled with fire, like Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration was filled with light.

But because we are damaged and darkened by sin, we don't shine that light very clearly. We are like lumps of coal, of no particular beauty. But coal can do one thing: it can burn. God created us able to bear His fiery presence. Repentance is the process of getting the impurities out of the coal, getting rid of everything that will not burn.

So that's our starting point. Repentance is not self-hatred; it's not an emotion at all. Repentance is just honesty — facing the truth about yourself and meeting the challenge to change. I like to say, "Everybody wants to be transformed, but nobody wants to change." ...

We do that by being faithful. We keep practicing the "workout routines" Scripture teaches: private prayer and bible study, corporate worship, fasting, care of the poor. One of the insights of Eastern Christianity is that sin starts with a thought (James 1:14-15). Sin begins with a thought, and habits like the ancient Jesus Prayer teach us how to recognize an unwanted thought — whether of pleasure or despair or fear — and turn it away. You don't fight it — that can just backfire. But, standing beside the Lord at the entrance of your mind, you can recognize a thought and turn it away. The word for "repentance" in biblical Greek is *metanoia*, and it means the transformation of your nous. St. Paul said, "Be transformed by the renewal of your nous" (Romans 12:2).

This is a complex therapeutic process, and it is going to happen in the order God knows best — which might not be the order we expect.

Sins form an interlocking structure within our frail and foolish selves, and that framework has to be dismantled in the right order. A sin we especially want to get rid of might be held in

place by a different sin, one that has to be removed first, even though we might not get the connection.

The process is like carefully removing the layers of an onion. You have to deal with the next layer that presents itself, even if you'd prefer to jump ahead. Jesus knows what we're strong enough to bear at what point. He said, "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (John 16:12).

But what does that have to do with times of persecution? ...

When I first saw the Christ of Sinai, I thought, there is something wrong with the eyes. Then I realized that what the artist has done here is he has portrayed two different facial expressions side by side. The right side is the eye of a surgeon. It's a diagnostic and a searching eye. It's not comfortable



This icon, called the "Christ of Sinai," has been in Saint Catherine's Monastery since it was built 1,500 year ago on Egypt's Mount Sinai. There's a meaning to the penetrating quality of Christ's gaze, says author Frederica Mathewes-Green.

under this gaze.

But there's actually a bit of humor in this. In the crook of the eyebrow, a little lift at the corner of the mouth, is an expression that says, "Oh, I've got your number." This is the eye that

looks right through us, right through our darkness, and wills to fill it with light.

And the left side is the eye of compassion. All the shadows have fled away and the face is full of quiet light. It's a patient eye, it's a listening eye. It has all the time you need. And that's a good thing because this process of healing is going to take a long time. It will probably take all your remaining time on earth.

Picture the face of a clock as if it represents the flow of history.

At noon, let's put a time that was very friendly to Christians, like the 1950s. At the bottom of the dial, at 6 o'clock, let's put a time when Christians suffered for their faith, like the days of the early martyrs. So the '50s are at noon, the Roman persecution at 6 o'clock. And where are we? I don't know. Are we at 3 o'clock or 9 o'clock? Rising or falling? I don't know.

But which time actually was the bad time? Christians suffered terribly in the early persecutions, but they also rose to great heights. Their lives radiated the life of Christ, and even when they were powerless and suffering, they drew many to the faith. We are still moved to the heart by their stories.

But on the other hand, the '50s saw a lot of perfunctory, bland Christianity. It was easy to be a Christian and not mean very much by it. That was hard and frustrating for those who felt that Christ challenges us to live a holy and a humble life, a transformed life that shines its light into the darkness, a light that is different from those in the world. The '50s couldn't be thought of really as such a perfect time to raise kids because look what happened when those same kids hit the '60s.

History will continue to roll around and around that dial, but at all times, God is at the center. He is always fully present to every Christian, of every age, every era. Not even a whisper away. Whether we face our culture's approval or disdain, God has placed us in the time that He thinks we are able to bear.

The early Christians didn't have the power to do anything in the public square except die. But they did that with such grace that they drew the whole world to Christ. If we follow in their footsteps, we cannot go far wrong.

*Frederica Mathewes-Green is a prolific author, public speaker and expert on the Eastern Orthodox Church. This excerpt is from her April 9, 2016 remarks at the Wilberforce Weekend in Arlington, Virginia.*



# 'Does the West care about us? Does the church care about us?'



**By Rep. Frank R. Wolf**

The Bible has much to say about persecution, oppression. ... In Luke 4:18, Jesus reads to the synagogue in Nazareth from Isaiah. He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free."

In Ecclesiastes 4:1, it says, "Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun. I saw the tears of the oppressed and they have no comforter. Power was on the side of their oppressors."

America's first freedom, religious freedom, has never been under more assault at home and abroad than it is today. I think what remains to be seen is whether the people of God will rise to such a time like this. I believe personally that religious freedom is the modern-day human rights issue of our time, both internationally and domestically.

In China, there are Catholic bishops under house arrest. There are hundreds of Protestant pastors in jail. I went to Tibet in the mid-'90s; 130 Tibetan monks this last year have poured kerosene on their bodies and lit a match to protest what the Chinese government is doing. Christian lawyers have been arrested over the last month, and the church in the West is silent.

In Nigeria, where we visited last month, we spent a week up in the Boko Haram area. Boko Haram is killing Christians, Boko Haram is burning villages, Boko Haram is targeting churches, killing thousands. You remember the outcry of the White House and of the West when 200-some Christian girls of Chibok were kidnapped by Boko Haram. The White House had a weekly breakfast and a radio address, and they said, #BringBackOurGirls. And then there has been silence.

It will be two years that the girls have been gone. The church in the West has said nothing. Said nothing.

We met with a missionary from America there who has been there for 30 years, and he said, "We are counseling the families, and here's what we are telling them: Your daughters may never come back. If they come back, they will have been raped over and over and over. Likely they will be pregnant, may very well carry HIV/AIDS. And lastly — tell this to a Christian parent — they will have been forced to convert to Islam."

And the church is silent.

In the Middle East, in Syria, 300,000 people have been killed. More biblical activity took place in Iraq than any other country of the world other than Israel. Abraham is from Ur,

modern-day Nasiriyah. Rebecca was from northwest Iraq. Jacob spent 20 years in Iraq. His sons, the 12 tribes of Israel, lived in Iraq. Daniel, the great man of the Bible, was buried in Iraq. Ezekiel, who spent most of his life in Iraq, in Babylon, is buried in Iraq.

The revival that took place in the book of Jonah took place in present-day Mosul, that ISIS now controls. Last year, eight months ago, ISIS blew up Jonah's tomb. Have we said anything?

In 2003 the Christian population in Iraq was 1.5 million. Today, we are at roughly 250,000 .... In 1948 the Jewish population of Iraq was 150,000. When we were there, I said, how many Jewish people are left? They said, officially perhaps 10 individuals. The same thing — as the church is silent, the same thing is happening to the Christian community. The Catholic group out of England did a report last month that said if the current trend continues, there will be no Christians left in Iraq in six years.

We were with Sister Diana and the Dominican sisters, who are so wonderful, who speak Aramaic, the same language of Jesus. We had dinner with them, and the question they ask, they said, "Mr. Wolf, does the West care about us?" And then I think perhaps the most profound question Sister Diana asked. She said, "Does the church in the West care?"

To a person, everyone we talked to expressed a pervasive sense of abandonment. They see the emergence of the caliphate in the cradle of Christendom. We went into one refugee camp and we talked to a man, and he told us this story. His wife had breast cancer. ISIS came in, took over his village,

then took over Mosul. Several weeks later, he took his wife to the hospital in Mosul to get cancer treatment. ISIS said they would not treat his wife unless she denied Christ and converted [to Islam]. She refused and he refused.

I don't know what I would do, quite frankly. I've been married 55 years. We have had cancer in my family up and down. If they told me that, I would have rationalized and said, "You know, God, you really know my heart, you know I'm not really converting."

But he did not deny Christ, and his wife did not deny Christ.

We reposition that with when we were in Israel, back in November. We went to the little town of Capernaum and we saw where they said was the site of Peter's house. And the guide said ... Peter came and visited here, and Jesus came and visited here, and Jesus ate with Peter. Right over there is where Peter heard Jesus give the Sermon on the Mount, and right over there is the Sea of Galilee, and Peter saw Jesus walk on the water, and yet what happened? Peter denied Christ three times.

And yet a construction worker and his wife in Iraq, who never saw Jesus, they did not deny Christ. And the church in the West is silent.

Rep. Frank R. Wolf (Virginia Republican) was a member of the House of Representatives (1981-2015), where he authored the International Religious Freedom Act. He is founder and co-chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and distinguished senior fellow of the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative. This excerpt is from his April 9, 2016, remarks at the Wilberforce Weekend in Arlington, Virginia.

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then they required them to travel to rudimentary training camps in obscure parts of the world. In contrast, ISIS has, in effect, outsourced training by turning cellphones into training camps, viewable by sympathizers in cities and countries the world over. You no longer have to live in a city you don't know with a language you don't speak (how do you even get to Afghanistan in the first place?) to join their jihad. ISIS has eliminated the most significant barrier of entry to jihad.

The second disruption is tactical.

When al Qaeda would plan an attack, they would employ dozens — if not hundreds — of people to devise complex plans that took years to execute. Those plans almost always failed, but when they were successful (i.e., the 9/11 terror attacks), they brought the world to its

knees.

ISIS has traded complexity for simplicity and scale for frequency. All you need to participate in the ISIS jihad is a weapon and some civilians.

The final disruption is theological. We will never defeat ISIS until we understand the role of religion in it.

ISIS recruits are particularly persuaded by the vision of the "Islamic State" or "caliphate" established by ISIS. Recruits watched as ISIS captured a contiguous piece of land between Iraq and Syria that was approximately the size of the United Kingdom, and they watched as terrorist groups in Libya, Nigeria, Indonesia, Egypt, Yemen and Somalia pledged their allegiance to them. The movement's success makes them believe it's prophetic. This even compels some of them to sympathize with the Islamic State, whether or not they agree with its brutality. You see this clearly in the chilling words of one 16-year-old ISIS

sympathizer interviewed by a British author. The teenager said, "I respect all my brothers going out to fight. ... The media makes them out to be like these crazy people brainwashed by crazy people, but that's not how we think about it at all. We have so much love and respect for them." Another European teenager concurred, saying joining ISIS is "a way to prove not just that you're a proper Muslim, but a proper man."

This disruption is real, and it will outlive ISIS.

Oh, and when another "expert" in the U.S. government says "they didn't see this coming," you can remind them that the Rand Corporation was screaming about it all more than a decade ago.

In a 2001 monograph, "Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy," Rand experts described a kind of terrorism "emerging in the information revolution," in which wiping out the leader (think bin

Laden or al-Baghdadi) is "insufficient" to stop terrorist networks. That is because they "consist of various small, dispersed groups that are linked in odd ways and do not have a clear leadership structure," and confronting terrorists networks happens at "technological, social and narrative levels."

We chose — and are choosing — to ignore what's changing about terrorism.

Johnnie Moore is a noted author and advocate for international religious freedom. He is the president of The KAIROS Company and author of "Defying ISIS: Preserving Christianity in the Place of Its Birth and in Your Own Backyard" (Thomas Nelson, 2015). His Twitter handle is @JohnnieM. This article is derived from his April 9 remarks at the Wilberforce Weekend in Arlington, Virginia.



# Be light!



**By the Rev. Samuel Rodriguez**

Today's complacency is tomorrow's captivity.

We cannot be complacent in these troubled times. As 21st-century Christ followers, we cannot deny that we live in difficult times: times of great moral relativism, cultural decadence, spiritual apathy and ecclesiastical lukewarmness. For many, the obituary of Bible-believing, Christ-centered Christianity seems, for all practical purposes, written and poised to be published in the annals of history.

Yet there exists one fundamental truth poised to thwart any and all premature burials of this powerful faith narrative: The gates of hell cannot, may not, shall not, will not prevail against the church of Jesus Christ.

To that regard, I stand convicted and convinced that our Christian faith and our Judeo-Christian value system will not only survive these troubled times, but, surprisingly, we may very well stand at the precipice of an awakening that will enable us to do nothing less than thrive.

Parenthetically, while our Bible-based, Christ-centered values and mores stand under unprecedented assault, the No. 1 problem confronting the church in

America and around the world may be nothing other than a church either willing to sacrifice truth on the altar of political and cultural expediency or unable to elevate corresponding truth with love.

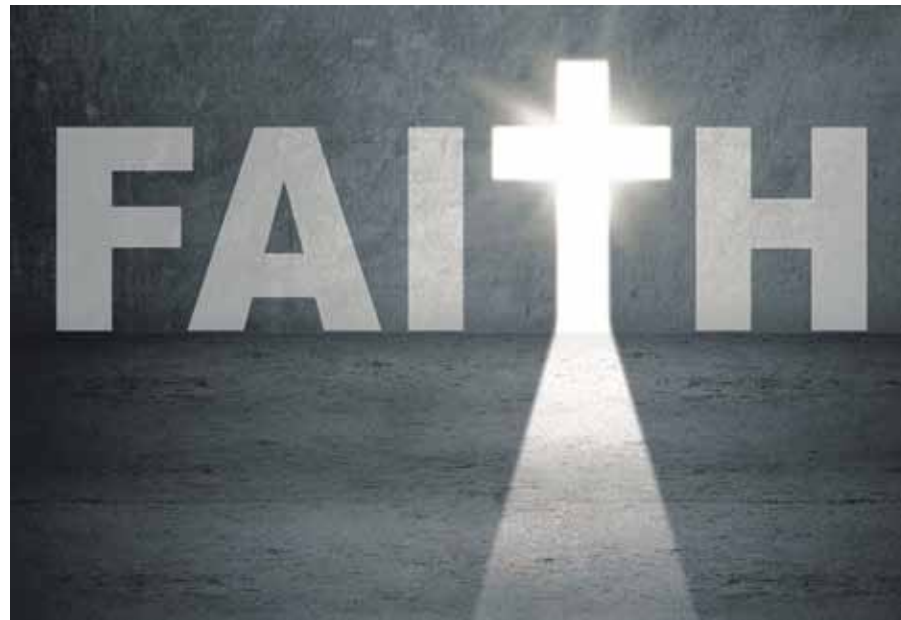
In other words, the prophetic prescription for these pathetic times resides in the children of the cross committed to reconciling righteousness with justice, sanctification with service, holiness with humility, conviction with compassion, rhetoric with tone, and truth with love. This reconciliatory prescription stands captured in a simple two-word admonition: "Be light."

Accordingly, it behooves us to ask, "What does it mean to 'be light'?" How can you best define this idea?" To "be light" can best be described as the nexus of the Christian message; the place where we reconcile the optic of redemption with the metric of reconciliation. In function, it serves to replace angry

evangelicalism with a loving, grace-filled presentation of the Gospel message. In form, it elevates the idea that Christianity is not about what we attempt to impose, but rather what we propose: a personal relationship with God through the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

In its essence, to "be light" reminds us that Christianity stands measured not by the variable of rhetorical eloquence, but rather by the constant of loving actions.

Correspondingly, in Matthew 5:14-16, our Lord and Savior uttered a powerful declaration, exhorting us to shine the light of this loving truth. "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."



Tangentially, our prophetic light requires an unshakable stand. This Christ-rendered exhortation compels us to embrace the transcendent and transformational reality that we may have "light," but it may very well be hidden under the "bowl" of anger, complacency, apathy and religious exuberance. Further, the implicit yet convicting narrative reveals that the "light" is only as good as it where it stands.

For at the end of the day, if we are to "be light," then we must remove all vestiges of contention, bitterness, apathy, complacency and anger while we shine on the stand of God's word, projecting grace. For this we know for certain, as we stand on love and elevate biblical truth, the beauty of Christ will shine; beauty incarnate indeed! Then and only then can we proceed with the unbridled certainty of this physical and spiritual undeniable fact: When light stands next to darkness, light always wins.

In conclusion, while religion requires us to get rid of darkness in order to prompt the light to shine, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus conveys the very opposite; be light and darkness will flee. For at the end of the day, we stand empowered by God's Spirit to "be holy," "be one" and "be light."

Then and only then can we change the world. Be light!

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Rev. Dr. Samuel Rodriguez is president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, the nation's largest organization for Hispanic Christian Evangelicals. ([www.NHCLC.org](http://www.NHCLC.org).) This excerpt is from his April 9 remarks at the Wilberforce Weekend, and is based on his new book, "Be Light: Shining God's Beauty, Truth, and Hope into a Darkened World" (Waterbrook, 2016).

## Restore brokenness by welcoming home the orphans



**By Kelly M. Rosati**

How many of you knew that we have orphans in the United States? I encounter people every day who haven't the foggiest idea that we have [100,000] orphans who need families in the United States.

And part of the reason is because we don't have orphanages on the street corner. Remember way back in the day, if you were to drive home ... past a building and it was St. Joseph's, and it would remind you, you would think about those kids who didn't have parents. Maybe you'd pray for them.

Now our orphans are embedded, and they are hidden in the foster care system. And frankly, they are also the kids that society says probably would've been better off being aborted and, number two, right now are really unadoptable. Because you know what, they are teenagers, they are sibling groups, they are kids with special needs.

I've got to tell you, not a lot of people want those kids. Even in the church, not a lot of people want those kids.

You say, "Why do you say that? Christians adopt all the time." And, of course, we do. But with 100,000 orphans waiting for families, and 300,000 churches in the United States of America, we can all do the math. If just one family in every third church welcomes home one of these modern-day orphans, we don't have orphans in the U.S. anymore.

Can you imagine the testimony and the witness to abba, father, in this nation if we eliminated, because of the church of Jesus Christ, the roles of modern-day orphans that nobody else wants? That is the opportunity before us.

The Bible says God is a gather to the fatherless. ... And of course we know James 1:27 says pure religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless — pure and faultless — is this: "to look after

widows and orphans in their distress, and keep oneself unstained by the world."

As I thought about the three things we are talking about here this weekend — promoting good, resisting evil and restoring brokenness — I thought about this idea of welcoming home the orphan. Everybody can see how that promotes good. We are for the family. We know about child well-being. We know about human flourishing. We know what God designed for that.

And then we talk about resisting evil. I would submit to you that one of the great evils that we need to, in fact, resist is the evil of children suffering in our midst and us turning away. ... If we are followers of Christ, who live perfectly

» see **ROSATI** | **C14**



# Strengthening our common bond in Jesus Christ



## By Rev. Robert Sirico

Like so many of you, the name Chuck Colson came to my consciousness in association with those troubled days of Watergate. I think we don't need to apologize for associating that period, Watergate, with Chuck Colson any more than we apologize for associating the road to Damascus with St. Paul.

As it turns out, as I began to hear about Chuck Colson in my own life, not knowing him personally back then, a conversion began to take place in my life that resulted in my returning to the faith that I had abandoned and eventually led to my going to seminary and becoming a priest.

I knew the name Chuck Colson even before I began the Acton Institute, which Providence would appoint would be established in Grand Rapids, Michigan. For our event the first year, we had Bill Buckley. The second year I said, I really would like to try to get Chuck Colson. I don't know

if that will be possible because we want people to understand that even though the Acton Institute is founded by a Catholic priest, it's not a Catholic organization. That's a hard myth to crack.

I wrote to Chuck, and when he came that night to a filled ballroom at the Amway Grand Hotel, the first thing he said to the gathered faithful was, "When I received this letter from a Roman Catholic priest in Grand Rapids, Michigan, I had to come personally to see if this was real, and who was this priest who had the audacity to begin an organization in a homeland of the Dutch Vatican."

I told Chuck that night that I was still looking for the Sistine Chapel but had not yet found it in Grand Rapids....and that began a wonderful and enduring friendship from that moment to the end.

I was instrumental in having Chuck invited to speak at the Vatican, and this was a very unusual experience for a lot of these cardinals. As we were sitting planning the event (it happened to be on the family), and one of the cardinals, who is since deceased, said to me, "So Father, who do you think should be at this? In addition to these names that we have, who do you think should be here?"

I said, "Well, you know, Your Eminence, I think we need to have one of the great leaders and defenders of the family in the United States, and he is an evangelical Protestant. Do you think we could invite

him?"

He said, "An evangelical Protestant?" And I said, "Yes. But he's a great defender of the family." He said, "Well, if you say so."

So Chuck came and gave, of course, a spellbinding speech. I don't remember if he quoted Abraham Kuyper in the halls of the Vatican, but I do remember that Chuck had an audience ... with John Paul II — John Paul the Great, as Chuck would call him — when John Paul was much older and much more enfeebled. In fact, the Pope couldn't stand.

And Chuck and Patty came up to meet the Pope, and in order to speak to the Pope, Chuck had to kneel down in front and was directing his comments to the Pope's ear. There was a photograph taken of that.

I remember later that day, I had picked up a copy of the actual photo and I showed it to Chuck, and he turned as white as a ghost. I said, "What's the matter, Chuck? I thought you'd want to make use of this photo, that you had met the Pope." He said, "But I am kneeling in this photo."

So any of you who have seen that photo, you have seen the cropped version of that photo. I will make available the full version for a substantial donation to the Colson Center.

Here is what I wanted to say in conclusion, and that is that Chuck Colson was no fake ecumenist. Chuck Colson was not interested in the form of ecumenism,

where people would politely talk with one another so as to negotiate away the truths of the faith so that we can talk about how we liked one another so much.

Chuck was a man of real faith, a real conviction and a real honesty. He was also a man who is captivated by Jesus Christ, and it is that that drew he and I together, along with people like Cardinal Avery Dulles and Father Richard John Neuhaus, of happy memory. That was his ecumenism. His idea of ecumenism was that as we move closer to Jesus Christ, we look around and find that we have also moved closer to each other.

A lot of the disagreement still exists, but our common bond in Jesus Christ enables us to confront a world that is in need of the Gospel, perhaps now more than it has ever been before.

I am proud tonight to say that I am a Catholic evangelical in the same sense that Chuck Colson was an evangelical Catholic. God bless you.

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*Rev. Robert A. Sirico is a Roman Catholic priest and co-founder and president of Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty. He is a frequent lecturer and commentator on economics, civil rights and issues of religious concern. This excerpt is from his April 9, 2016 remarks at the Wilberforce Weekend in Arlington, Virginia.*

## ROSATI

From page C13

comfortable lives while suffering swirls around us, and we are not people who run to the suffering, then I think we have missed it.

I have a friend named David. When he was 4 years old, he and his 2-year-old brother went into foster care.

David grew up his entire life in care. He was in some 17 different settings, ultimately in a group home. And when he became 18, he was out on his own, walked out of the facility. No job, no money, no family.

For those of you who have had kids that are 18, it's scary enough when they go off. Can you imagine becoming an adult who belongs nowhere and with no one? That was David's story. When he met and married his wife, no one came to their wedding. Can you imagine? This is the future that we are facing if the church and followers of Jesus Christ do not come for the waiting kids.

But there's lots of good news. ... At Focus on the Family,

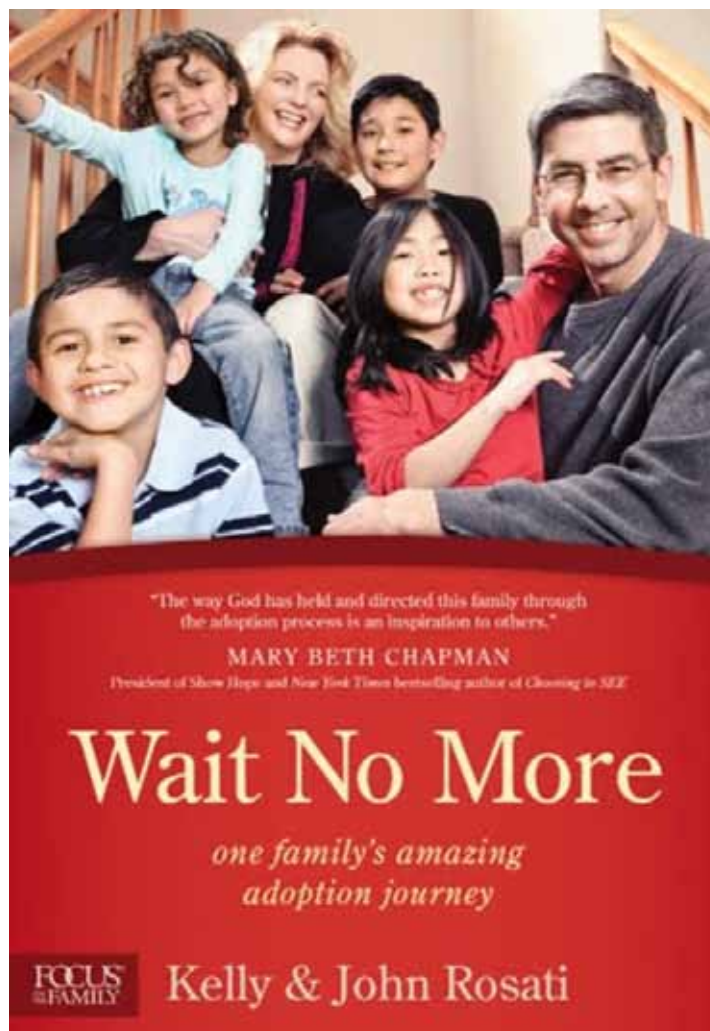
we have a program called the "Wait No More: Finding Families for Waiting Kids."

And we go into communities ... we partner with state governments, local governments ... adoption agencies, churches, everybody in that space who cares that there are orphans down the block from where you live. And we get them together, and we talk about God's heart for the orphan; we talk about the needs of the kids. And then they get to hear perspectives from moms and dads and from folks that were adopted.

And, at the end of the time, they are able to actually begin the process of adoption on that day. And we have seen God do truly miraculous things as a result.

I'm real passionate about this, not just because this gets to be my job, which makes me very blessed, but my husband and I were blessed that our four kids came to us through adoption from foster care. In our family we are Korean, Hawaiian, Filipino, Chinese, Vietnamese, Micronesian, Italian and Irish. So we are all mixed up.

My kids have also given me



permission to talk about the fact that we are also walking through, and have been walking through for 15 years, issues of severe mental illness, of children having been born addicted to crystal meth amphetamines, to children having been born addicted to alcohol and the effects of fetal alcohol syndrome.

I say it that way to remind you that ... these things are very, very important, and they are part of the reason why families who do welcome home kids with severe trauma histories need the support of their church families. Every one of my kids is so worth every bit of the pain and the difficulty. And God has used that pain and that difficulty to change us and to conform us into the image of his son.

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*Kelly M. Rosati is vice president of community outreach at Focus on the Family, and oversees its Adoption & Orphan Care Initiative as well as other pro-family programs. This excerpt is from her April 9, 2016, remarks at the Wilberforce Weekend in Arlington, Virginia.*



# God's 'counterintuitive' plan to vanquish anger, fear, despair



## By Dr. Joseph M. Stowell

I don't need to tell you that we live in an increasingly dark and dangerous world... that something bad has happened to our world. And, given the state of our world, I find that the operational attitude of a lot of Christians, who take our world seriously and who don't see immediate solutions, is increasing despair.

We need to remind ourselves that Christ was born into a dangerously dark world. Soon after His birth, the megalomaniac Herod issued a decree that every boy under the age of two should be slaughtered. Think of the tragedy, think of the crying mothers and broken families. Jesus Christ Himself began his first years of life as a refugee in Egypt, and as he began his ministry, his cousin, John the Baptist, was beheaded.

So living in a bad world is nothing new. What we desperately need is to understand how to navigate life in a world like this. How to live fruitfully with courage and conviction in winsome ways that brings glory to God. Hunkering down in a spirit of despair is not the answer.

I have to admit that a spirit of despair is easy to come by. Most of us are very much aware that our nation has now moved into a hostile secularism that's robbing us of our freedoms. Our stance on issues of human sexuality and the sanctity of life have marginalized us and rendered our voices of no avail. While we have often heard that sticks and stones will break our bones but names will never hurt us, names do hurt us! It's no fun to be finger-pointed as bigoted, or to be called arrogant, or to be falsely dismissed as homophobic.

With a lot of us, there's a strange mixture of anger and fear. Anger that

somebody hijacked our America. And fear — fear of the kind of world our children are growing up in, fear of the kind of world that our grandchildren will be growing up in. Despair is fanned by our feeling that we are helpless to turn the tide. In this environment, despair is indeed easy to come by.

So I find it interesting that Paul, writing to marginalized, persecuted Christians, called them to attitudes that are polar opposites to despair. In Colossians 1:9-13, Paul urges followers of Jesus to embrace five attitudes that seem counterintuitive to living in a dark and troubling world. He writes, "And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you, first of all, may *walk worthy of the Lord*, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. That you might be *strengthened with all*

the midst of violent persecution. How do you *walk worthy* of someone you have given your life to, who isn't interceding for you, in a world where you suffer and the pagans prosper? What would motivate you to walk worthy of Christ in a world like that? Or to be strong in the face of the intimidation of the power of the Roman Empire? To say nothing of persisting when you feel like you are persisting to your own demise. Or to be joyful? Grateful?

The turning point of the text is that all five of these Biblical expectations are built on that ultimate awareness that we have been delivered from the domain of darkness and placed into in the kingdom of his dear Son. We are no longer caught in the grip of this dark world but are now firmly planted in His kingdom!

This text reminds us that there are just two kingdoms, and that we are involved in a struggle that is far above us and far below us. As Paul says in Ephesians 6, we wrestle not against flesh and

of chaos; Christ's is a kingdom of shalom. Satan's kingdom thrives on anarchy where everyone does what is pleasing in his own sight; Christ's kingdom is organized by a constitution under which mankind thrives in a world of righteousness, peace and joy (Romans 8). And Christ's kingdom is eternal and victorious — vetted by the high point of redemptive history, the resurrection of Jesus.

On the Saturday before Easter, in a Wall Street Journal op-ed piece titled "The Challenge of Easter," James Martin wrote, "What difference does Easter make in the life of the Christian? The message of Easter is, all at once, easy to understand, radical, subversive and life-changing. Easter means that nothing is impossible with God. Moreover, that life triumphs over death. That love triumphs over hatred. That hope triumphs over despair."

So embracing our kingdom identity dramatically alters our attitude. When Paul tells me in this text to walk worthy, I'm highly motivated to do that because I serve a worthy victorious king. I can live in his power because I belong to a risen Christ whose power had defeated death and hell, and I get to participate in the victory. When life gets really hard in this dark world, I can persist because I know that someday every knee shall bow to my King, and when that day comes I want to know that I faithfully persisted to honor his name.

And joy? My pervasive sense of well-being as a kingdom person engenders that deep sense of joy. Gratitude? If Jesus Christ never does anything but deliver me from the domain of darkness and grant me citizenship in the kingdom of his dear Son, I have something to be thankful for the rest of my life. All of this to say, if you are a kingdom person, despair is not your vocabulary.

And when this world gets dark and despair threatens our soul, let's remember the words of Jesus who said, "In this world you will have trouble. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."

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Dr. Joseph M. Stowell is president of Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is a pastoral leader, former president of Moody Bible Institute, and author of several books, including "Redefining Leadership: Character-Driven Habits of Effective Leaders." This excerpt is from his April 10, 2016 remarks at the Wilberforce Weekend in Arlington, Virginia.



power, according to his glorious might, for all *endurance* with *joy*, *giving thanks* to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. For He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transplanted us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption and forgiveness of sins."

Think about what these attitudinal challenges mean to Christians living in

blood, but against principalities, against powers and the rulers of darkness in this world. And it reminds us as well that these two kingdoms have unique defining cultures. Satan's kingdom is a kingdom characterized by darkness. But the Kingdom of Jesus is characterized by light! As Jesus claimed, "I am the light of the world." The light of His kingdom dispels the darkness, dispels the danger, dispels the disorientation. Satan's kingdom is one



# Live with hope, despite a world of apathy, hardened hearts



**By Dr. Bill Brown**

One of the reasons I am involved with the Colson Center and Colson Fellows program is because it is the heart of what I've been doing most of my life: speaking and writing on issues related to worldview....

In America, we find ourselves in a culture where the Christian worldview is no longer the default. Our culture no longer has even a modicum of biblical literacy and understanding of Christian ethics, or an appreciation of our religious history.

We are in a wasteland between two mountain ranges. One is that of religious fundamentalism; not just Muslim fundamentalism but many times Christian fundamentalism, where moralism is confused with evangelism, and where legalism replaces grace. Pointing the finger and shouting is quite an ordinary strategy.

The other mountain range is fundamentalist atheism: same tactics, different message.

And here we are in the middle, where people go from place to place, finding something they want to believe in, or maybe not. It really doesn't matter.

To be a Christian today, to understand the person of Jesus Christ and what he has done and what it means to commit ourselves to him, takes a little bit of thought. You have to think about it because we have more information than ever.

Teenagers and preteens today are actually reading more than they have ever read. Most of it is online, but they are reading more, getting more information and more challenges to faith. This is not only in the moral sector but even in the philosophical and religious sector. And they are not sure what to do with it.

Because of this confusing social and spiritual world we live in, we actually have to think about what we believe; not just once but continually. Every day. And I think that's a good thing. It's taking up

your cross daily.

But frankly, many young people today do not openly reject Christ; they just don't care. They don't even want to think about, let alone come to conclusions about, ultimate issues in life — like origin, meaning, morality and destiny — the very foundation of a worldview, the very foundation of an individual's life. Why bother? They just don't care.

I would rather stand toe to toe with a radical Muslim (which I have done a number of times) or a radical atheist than somebody who doesn't care. Because you can't make people care.

It's called apatheism. Bill Maher, a well-known celebrity who holds this

work in the world, and in spite of the overwhelming persecution the readers are undergoing, he urges them to activate that confidence — confidence to enter the most holy place by a new and living way, Jesus Christ, the risen Lord.

Second, this risen Lord was also their great high priest, the one who is interceding for them to God. ... These truths remain for us. We must have confidence because we have the same Jesus as our intercessor. And because these are true for us, the following instructions apply to us as well:

First, "let us draw near to God with full assurance of faith"... Serving Christ means we know Christ. It is a vision. It

anything. But they mean everything to our Father. We draw near to God with full assurance that He is there. He is! Try it. That's what God says.

Second, "we hold unswervingly to the hope we profess." Hope is the most important of the three Christian virtues. You may say, in 1 Corinthians 13, the greatest of these is love. The greatest, but not the most important. Even Peter says we are always ready to give an answer for — what? Hope (1 Peter 3:15). Why? Because hope is very visual and very visible to people when they see how you live, how you respond, how you treat people. We hold unswervingly to this hope because it is real. It's not a maybe.

And then third, "therefore, we consider how we can spur each other, first to love and then to good works." That's what we do with the Colson Fellows ... with the Colson Center; that's what many of you are doing in your lives. We draw near to God. We have hope. It's so visible, the way that we live, and then we are looking around for opportunities to serve, to care, to love.

Notice, in these instructions, written in times of severe persecution, there is not one word of animosity, vitriol or outrage. That's not what Christians do. That's not what Jesus did...

This approach is in the mission statement of the Colson Center.... [which] exists "to ignite hope by informing, equipping and uniting the body of Christ to live the Christian worldview in this cultural moment" ... Does that sound good? There's no outrage in there either. We want to ignite hope. ... I like the word ignite; let's get hope burning!

We can ignite hope by informing. Listen to BreakPoint. Every day, you can hear a biblical perspective of life in the world. And you don't hear any outrage in there either, do you?

We can ignite hope by equipping. That's what we do in the Colson Fellows program, to equip you to serve substantively in a confusing and hopeless culture.

And we can ignite hope by uniting. Some Christians don't like that, but we unite the body of Christ for the vision Christ laid out for us. To do what? To live the Christian worldview in this cultural moment. May God give us the strength, the favor, the power to do just that.

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*William E. (Bill) Brown, Ph.D., is senior fellow of worldview and culture at the Colson Center for Christian Worldview. He is an academic, filmmaker and prolific writer, with a popular Web log, Radical Life, at [www.williamebrown.org](http://www.williamebrown.org). This excerpt is from his April 10, 2016 remarks at the Wilberforce Weekend in Arlington, Virginia.*



position, has a short piece on YouTube describing how he used to be an atheist but now he just really doesn't care.

And this group is much larger than we think. The flood of information from the Internet does not make people smarter; it has hardened their hearts. This disinclination toward God, combined with the cultural and spiritual milieu in which we find ourselves, results in a growing antagonism toward people who really believe something, who really want to follow Jesus Christ....

In this context, the writer of Hebrews 10:19-21 gives us some admonitions. The times were difficult for this readers of his letter. He spent the first nine and a half chapters describing why we have confidence in the person of Christ and in God's

is hope that drives us, and it comes from a personal relationship with Christ, an intimate relationship with Christ that we renew regularly. It begins on our knees.

I think of William Wilberforce. We talk about those decades he worked in perseverance for the elimination of the slave trade and slavery. Every day, he was on his knees, and that's where we start. And your prayers matter! When I realized that God exists beyond time, and He is not limited by our sequential time structure, that's when I came aware that God gives me His full attention when I pray. That's what He has promised. It doesn't take God any time when you pray.

When you start talking to Him, He is there. Sometimes we are not aware of that and we think our words don't mean



# Remembering Colson and his three 'lodestars'



**By Dr. Timothy George**

It was in the early 1990s when I was working on a project. I closed the door to my office and said to my secretary, "No matter who calls, I don't want to be interrupted."

A few minutes later, I was interrupted.

There she was, my wonderful secretary, LeeAnn Little, saying, "There's a guy on the phone who says he's got to talk to you." I said, "Who is it?" She said, "I don't know, but he's very insistent."

It was Chuck.

Chuck Colson was calling and the first thing he said to me is, "Who is Timothy George?" I said, "Well, I'm a Baptist theologian, I'm a scholar, I'm an historian." He said, "Well, you're also the one who wrote that editorial in Christianity Today about Evangelicals and Catholics Together [ECT]. And I had said something good about it. I think I was the only person who said anything good about it at the time."

So Chuck said, "You've got to come and join this project." Which really at that time was just beginning, begun by Chuck and Richard John Neuhaus, with a vision to bring it together people of deep conviction, Catholics and Evangelicals, to deal with some of the pressing moral issues of our time.

My editorial called ECT an "ecumenism of the trenches." And it's a phrase that both Chuck and Richard picked up and used a number of times to describe our project. But over time, "ecumenism of the trenches" became something more. As we were together, facing a common enemy, we began to turn toward one another in love and respect and greater mutual understanding, to affirm that we are indeed brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

Well, two of the things that Chuck most cared about were Evangelicals and Catholics Together, and the Manhattan Declaration. I'm so happy to be here tonight to say both of those initiatives ... continue today and are growing and are strong, under the leadership of the Colson Center...

We have dealt with the three issues in the Manhattan Declaration — religious freedom, the sanctity of life and marriage, and the ECT process. Now we have turned outward to deal with another question that may be more urgent, or prior to those others, and that is the question of what is Christianity in a culture that is at loss to define anything about the truths of anything. We want to ask that question today as Evangelicals and Catholics Together.

Chuck was a remarkable person in many, many ways. He was a forgiven sinner. He had experienced forgiveness and he knew how to extend forgiveness to others. Many of you were present at the [2012] memorial service we had for Chuck at the National Cathedral. I told the story about Lanny Davis, a Democratic political operative on the opposite side of every issue from Chuck Colson, whom Chuck had approached at a national prayer breakfast dinner. He said to him, "I've wanted to talk to you for a long time. I want to ask you to forgive me."

"Forgive you? For what?" Lanny Davis asked.

"Well, I'm the one who put you on the enemies list during the Nixon days, and that was wrong. Will you forgive me?"

"Of course I forgive you, Mr. Colson."

Lanny Davis was present when I told that story at the National Cathedral. He came up afterward and spoke to me, tears in his eyes, and said, "I learned something really important from Chuck

Colson in that encounter, and I vowed that I would never use the word 'hate' about people in politics with whom I disagreed."

Chuck Colson was a forgiven sinner. Because he had experienced forgiveness, he knew how to extend it to others. He was a lawyer. He was also a very good student of the Bible and theology. He loved history, and the three figures in history who were his lodestars in many ways, who gave him inspiration, include William Wilberforce.

William Wilberforce was a young member of Parliament who devoted his life to the abolition of the slave trade. It didn't happen quickly. It didn't happen in a short or easy process. It took a long time, enormous effort over many years. William Wilberforce was a reformer with a long view, and I think that's what Chuck Colson would ask of us who follow in his steps.

Abraham Kuyper has been mentioned two or three times, and that would please Chuck enormously that Abraham Kuyper is being spoken of at this meeting. One thing we forget about Kuyper is that he was a theologian but he was also a prime minister of the Netherlands. In his day, there were two great problems that he wanted Christians to resist. One was utopianism, the bringing of God's kingdom to earth by human effort. He knew that was a fatuous dream. The other was sectarianism, withdrawing from the world into a holy huddle. Kuyper said we have to

be engaged. That would be a call I think Chuck Colson would want to say to us at this moment in our history.

The third figure was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who in 1937 said, when Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. So if we follow Chuck Colson, we're going to keep in mind these lessons from these great three figures.

Another figure in American theology who has had a great influence was Richard Niebuhr. Niebuhr once said this, "Nothing which is really true or beautiful or good makes any complete sense in a given context of history, and therefore, we must be saved by faith. Nothing which is worth doing can be achieved in our own lifetime, and so we must be saved by hope. And nothing, however virtuous we do, can be accomplished alone. And so we must be saved by love."

These three remain, faith, hope, love. The greatest of these is love, and Chuck Colson was a man of all three, of faith, of hope and of love.

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*Timothy George, Ph.D., is founding dean of Beeson Divinity School and professor of Divinity history and doctrine. He is active in Evangelical-Roman Catholic Church dialogue and was a co-author, with Chuck Colson and Prof. Robert George of the Manhattan Declaration. This excerpt is from his April 9, 2016 remarks at the Wilberforce Weekend in Arlington, Virginia.*





# Recovering William Wilberforce's impact on civilization



**By Chuck Stetson**

Chuck Colson loved William Wilberforce for many reasons, and in 1988 started a Wilberforce Award to honor the individual who, as a Christian in the footsteps of Wilberforce, stood up for doing the right thing in challenging times. The first honoree was Benigno Aquino, who heroically stood up to Filipino dictator Ferdinand Marcos and was later assassinated by Marcos at the now-renamed Manila Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Over the years, there were many other awardees, as listed below.

I remember first attending the Wilberforce Award dinners in the late 1990s. Who is this guy, William Wilberforce? I had no idea. As I started to research Wilberforce, I found a fascinating man, who on Oct. 28, 1787, had written in his diary, "God Almighty has set before me two great objects: the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners."

Interestingly enough, Wilberforce

achieved both in his lifetime. An amazing accomplishment for anyone, and something that greatly impacted the British Empire and the world.

However, Wilberforce has been pushed out of the history textbooks in America. How odd, considering that when Wilberforce died, free blacks in New York City wore black armbands in his honor for 30 days. Benjamin Hughes, a black pastor, gave a stem-winder of a eulogy for Wilberforce. Abraham Lincoln, in a 1858 campaign speech for the U.S. Senate, said, "Schoolboys know Wilberforce and Granville Sharp advanced [the abolition] cause forward." This was amazing, since Wilberforce had never been to the U.S.

However, today only 3 percent of Americans and 10 percent of the British know about Wilberforce.

Yet, William Wilberforce's reputation as a leading British parliamentarian had reached America because he had, as a man of faith, used his political and social influence to change the world. Wilberforce led the effort to abolish the slave trade in Britain, a measure which passed in Parliament and was affirmed by King George III on March 25, 1807. Wilberforce then turned to abolishing the slave trade in the British Empire. Upon his deathbed in July 1833, he received news that Parliament had passed a law, effective in 1834, abolishing slavery in all of the British Empire.

Many people think in the short term; they want to get things done promptly. Wilberforce's campaign to abolish slavery was a 46-year-long quest that he never gave up.

In his famous speech to Parliament in May 1789 that initiated the campaign, Wilberforce said: "As soon as ever I had

arrived thus far in my investigation of the slave trade, I confess to you sir, so enormous, so dreadful, so irremediable did its wickedness appear that my own mind was completely made up for the abolition. A trade founded in iniquity, and carried on as this was, must be abolished, let the policy be what it might, let the consequences be what they would, I from this time determined that I would never rest till I had effected its abolition."

But Wilberforce was so much more. While not being recognized as such, Wilberforce invented modern-day philanthropy, as he was one of the first wealthy individuals who had a systematic way of approach charitable giving. Not only did Wilberforce give to charities, he also created many, including the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which is my wife's personal favorite. He also was actively engaged in 69 charities — vice president of 29, on the committee of five, a governor of five, treasurer of one and patron of one.

Philanthropic foundations today have much to learn about giving from William Wilberforce, as he did it so well and was engaged far beyond what most philanthropic foundations do today.

The breadth of his giving to improve the world around him is breathtaking. Below is a list of 10 categories that he gave to; for more information go to [www.thebetterhour.org/tb/essayconcern](http://www.thebetterhour.org/tb/essayconcern).

1. Human rights
2. Literacy programs
3. Universal education
4. Arts
5. Encouraging the talents and gifts of others
6. Science
7. Health care

8. Prisoner rehabilitation and re-entry
9. Broadening philanthropy
10. Faith leadership

In the latter category of faith leadership, Wilberforce helped establish the Church Missionary Society, which later sent Eric Liddell (of the film "Chariots of Fire") to China, David Livingstone to Africa, and William Carey to India, where he, among other things, founded universities and improved the lives of so many.

Wilberforce also provided a provoking and thoughtful book on "Practical View of the Religious Practices of the Higher and Upper Middle Classes as Compared with Real Christianity." This book was a best-seller for nearly 50 years, with 13 editions printed in England and 26 in the U.S. It is still one of the best books ever published by a lay person describing how a Christian should engage the world. It is a book that needs to be read today and taken to heart.

We need to recover and understand who William Wilberforce was. Thank God that Chuck Colson discovered Wilberforce and brought him to our attention again, and that the Colson Center continues the tradition that Chuck started, which is to each year bestow a Wilberforce Award on a deserving, modern-day hero.

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*Chuck Stetson is the CEO of Essentials in Education, a philanthropic foundation committed to addressing the increasing gap between what people need to know and what they are being taught. He is also the third-generation CEO of the Stetson Family Office and the founding CEO of Private Equity Investors, Inc., which provides liquidity to investors in illiquid private equity investments.*

## Wilberforce Award Winners:

**2016: Chuck Colson (1931-2012)**  
**2015: Professor Robert P. George**  
**2014: Reverend Canon Andrew P. B. White**  
**2013: His Eminence Cardinal Timothy Dolan**  
**2012: Joni Eareckson Tada**  
**2011: Dr. Wayne Gordon**  
**2010: Ambassador Tony P. Hall**  
**2009: Bishop John Rucyahana**  
**2008: Hon. Albert H. Quie**  
**2007: Mr. Gary Haugen**  
**2006: Hon. Joseph R. Pitts**  
**2005: Mr. Constantin Asavaoia**  
**2004: Dr. Phillip E. Johnson**  
**2003: Hon. Sam Brownback**

**2002: Hon. Christopher H. Smith**

**2001: Hon. William E. Simon (1927-2000)**  
**2000: Bishop Macram Max Gassis**  
**1999: Dr. John M. Perkins**  
**1998: Fr. Richard J. Neuhaus**  
**1997: Mr. Michael J. Horowitz**  
**1996: Hon. Kay Cole James**  
**1995: Baroness Caroline Cox of Queensberry**  
**1994: Hon. Sam Nunn**  
**1993: Dr. Jorge Crespo Toral**  
**1992: Rev. Gábor Roszik**  
**1991: Hon. William L. Armstrong**  
**1990: Hon. Frank R. Wolf**  
**1988: Benigno S. Aquino, Jr. (1932-1983)**





# Chuck Colson: A man of faith and reason



**Princeton law scholar Robert P. George gave this message by video to the April 8-10 Wilberforce Weekend conference, where iconic Christian leader Chuck Colson was posthumously honored with the 2016 Wilberforce Award.**

Scarcely a day goes by when I don't remember and miss and feel the inspiring spirit of my late, beloved friend Chuck Colson. I am so sorry I can't be with all of you this evening to remember Chuck and

celebrate his life and all the good that he did for all of us.

Chuck was a very, very dear friend and a great hero, a great Christian hero. He was a disciple of Jesus who was so close to him. His relationship with our Lord was so deeply personal that I can't help but think of Chuck as an apostle.

I think of him, in fact, as the apostle of faith and reason because Chuck was a Christian who understood that faith and reason go together in living a Christian life. And faith and reason are especially necessary today as we struggle in the face of the many problems that we are encountering in our society — problems that Chuck foresaw (he was so prescient) and which he called upon us to take leadership roles in addressing.

Think of the sanctity of human life in all stages and conditions, a value, a foundational principle that has been so severely under assault for the past 45 or even 50 years. Or marriage and the family, another foundational, fundamental principle that

Chuck was so dedicated to, another principle again very deeply under attack.

Or religious freedom and the rights of conscience. Chuck was very early in seeing the attacks that would come against religious freedom, and so he brought us together to form the Manhattan Declaration. It was Chuck's declaration that drew us as a family to pledge ourselves that we would honor God's law, even above the law of men. That we would, of course, render unto Caesar ungrudgingly what is Caesar's, but never render unto Caesar what is God's.

And so we are inspired by Chuck's memory and by the great example he set for us. That inspiration will carry us through.

Chuck knew that we need to be always prepared to give a reason for the hope that was within us, as Scripture calls upon us, to renew our minds. He knew that we had to be intellectually prepared to address the great issues of our day.

And so, led by his example, let's do just that. Chuck liked to recall the image that was the opening lines of the great encyclical, *fides et ratio* [faith and reason] of Pope John Paul II. He was the pope whom Chuck and I both greatly admired. We called him "John Paul the Great."

The pope's image is this: "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit ascends to contemplation of truth." How much Chuck liked to quote that image, and I do too.

Let's bear it in mind as we remember Chuck this evening, as we celebrate his life. Let's commit ourselves to bring faith and reason to bear in our lives as Christians, as we share the Gospel with others, in our lives as citizens, and as we stand up strong, proud, persevering, unbending for the great principles of the sanctity of human life, marriage and family, and religious liberty and the rights of conscience.

God bless you all.

## A passionate leader and 'fully present' father and family man



**By Emily Colson**

It is truly an honor to be here, to be here together as a family .... especially in light of the 40th anniversary of Prison Fellowship and the 25th anniversary of BreakPoint. You have given our family a great gift....

We remember those early years of Prison Fellowship. ... My dad took [me and my brothers] into prisons. We saw things that we never dreamed we would see. The joy in that prison when the men praised God was unlike anything I've ever experienced. We could tell every time we went into a prison with our dad why he would say he loved to preach in prison more than any other place in the world.

There's a Scripture that's always been used with Prison Fellowship, from Isaiah: "A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out."

The first time I went back to Quantico Cemetery to see my dad's gravesite ... I sat on the grass for the longest time. And then I saw it. Someone had placed a reed

right up against my dad's stone. And I picked that reed up. It was not bruised or broken. It was whole.

Our dad had a deep passion to raise up other Christian leaders, to speak into their lives, to encourage them, to develop them. And from that desire, the Colson Center was born. He wanted other people to understand the truth of Jesus Christ and how that impacts the way we see all of life, and how that impacts the way we live....

I used to love to sit at the breakfast table with my dad. The table, you couldn't even see. It was covered with newspapers. Some of you know what that looked like with my dad. It was covered with newspapers and a yellow legal pad and his pen, and his black address book and his telephone and his 3x5 cards that would come in and out of his pocket with ideas.

It was like we would get caught in the backdraft of his energy. It was awesome, wasn't it? But I loved to sit there in the morning, and sometimes he would read something to me from "Streams in the Desert" or something from the Bible. He was such an encourager to me in my own life. My dad made me feel like nothing too terrible could ever happen in the world.

As many accomplishments as our dad had, he was fully present for us and the family, hopping on a plane or on the phone when there was any kind of a need, or even when there wasn't. He loved being with his family and we loved being with him.

Something happened to my dad when my son Max [came around] — some of you know I have a really awesome son. Max is 25, with autism. Nobody could get my dad to clear his schedule. Nobody could get my dad to stop working — except Max. When we would come for a week, the phone calls stopped, writing stopped, the staff had a vacation. I think there were parties in the office because 'Max and Emily are there.'

But it was glorious because we just had time together. My dad would get down on the floor and play trains and Legos with Max. He played a hiding game and hide under the bed to surprise Max because it just gave Max such joy. He spent a whole day one day just side-by-side with Max, teaching him how to wax a car. I'm not sure who had a better time. Their relationship deepened my dad's understanding of the sanctity of human life.

A few years back, as you heard President Bush say, we went to the Oval Office with my dad and [wife] Patty. It was really exciting for our dad to receive a 2008 Presidential Citizens Medal. It was great. It was so exciting. We got in there, waiting to go into the Oval Office, and we walked in the Roosevelt Room. And as soon as we walk in, Dad pointed to a chair and he said, "That's my seat." He said, "That's where I sat every morning in the White House for briefings." He said, "That's where we sat when we thought the decisions we were making would change the world."

Well, it turns out God changed our

dad's heart when the decision he made was for Christ. None of this was easy or comfortable or convenient. But our dad was obedient to the call of Christ, and he would not have done it any other way.

And like his hero, William Wilberforce, God accomplished great things through Chuck Colson. He lived, he lives in a strong, steady pulse of life in Christ.

Someone said to me this morning, we can finally give Chuck Colson the award he never would've accepted. You know he would have fought against this. But I think there's one way he would have readily accepted.... It would honor our dad greatly to share the recognition of this award with ... volunteers, friends, co-laborers in Christ, those who will stand on the truth of Christ...

Those who persevere for the sake of the Gospel, those who are obedient to the call of Christ, those who know that God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, you are Chuck Colson's legacy.

And may we say, with the Apostle Paul, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. And as our dad would encourage us, remain at your posts and do your duty. God bless you, and thank you.

.....  
*Emily Colson is a speaker and author of "Dancing with Max: A Mother and Son Who Broke Free" (Zondervan, 2010). This is an excerpt from her April 9 remarks to the 2016 Wilberforce Award Dinner, which honored her father, Charles W. "Chuck" Colson.*



# Tributes from Colson Fellows



## By Dr. D. Michael Lindsay

“The Colson Fellows program was a tremendous blessing in my spiritual, personal and professional development. I greatly benefitted from the opportunity to meet extraordinary people from around the country, while also being exposed to great thinkers who integrate Christian reflection into cultural analysis that touches every part of our lives. I highly recommend this program for anyone who wants to better understand

the ways that their Christian worldview allows them to excel in an increasingly pluralistic culture.”

.....  
*D. Michael Lindsay, Ph.D., president of Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts, and author of “Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite” (Oxford University Press, 2008) and “View From the Top: An Inside Look at How People in Power See and Shape the World” (Wiley, 2014).*



## By Brett Fischer

“The Centurions Program, now the Colson Fellows program, transformed my life. Since 1997, I’ve been practicing as a pediatric physical therapist in a very small, rural Indiana community. I love to help children reach past the limitations the world places on them. However, over the years of serving these families, I’ve seen how the pressures and stressors of raising a child with a disability becomes overwhelming to the

family. I often tell people that participating in Chuck Colson’s 2006 program challenged me to think differently about my service to these children. Also, after years of thinking of how to make a bigger impact, I realized there wasn’t really a platform for families raising children with disabilities to receive Christian worldview training. So by faith, in 2012 we started a nonprofit ministry, Victory Lane Camp, which merged pediatric physical therapy, worldview education and community building. Victory

Lane Camp essentially combines two sets of families: one raising kids with disabilities and one raising kids without disabilities. We intentionally build ‘deep relationships’ through the camps, provide worldview training at camp, and then facilitate programmed ‘relationship building opportunities’ throughout the calendar year.”

.....  
*Brett Fischer, MPT, founder of Victory Lane Camp (www.victorylanecamp.org) in New Castle, Indiana.*



## By Ted Seymour

“I had the joy and great privilege to attend the Centurions program when it was first launched. Meeting Chuck Colson was a treat; I enjoyed his sense of humor and insight. It did three things for me: (1) Made me read and study books and see movies I would never had an interest in. (2) It created a unique hunger to know more about God’s world. (3) In my international travels, it provided ease in conversations on flights

with businessmen and people of other cultures. I found I was articulate in many subjects because of the Centurions program. I made many friends and had the opportunity to share my faith in Christ with Hindu, Muslim and other religious backgrounds.”

.....  
*Ted Seymour, president and CEO of Active Outreach Mission fund Inc., in Boca Raton, Florida.*



## By Steve Fedyski

“The Colson Center’s Centurion Program provided me an inspirational, foundational, and practical educational experience that was a catalyst for personal and cultural change. I learned false ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the Gospel. Gaining a greater grasp of Christianity as a worldview has been important not only for pre-evangelism but also for apologetics (a defense or vindication of what we believe). This

extraordinary training heightened my understanding that we must rely on the impact of the Gospel, but also follow the New Testament pattern of engaging the pagan culture physically and also conceptually. As a Centurion, I am well positioned to influence the global culture for Christ as an overseer of global operations for Pure Flix Entertainment (the world leader in producing and distributing faith and family media with worldwide blockbuster films like ‘God’s Not Dead’). Our theatrical films,

episodic television shows, and Pure Flix Digital platform, which streams faith and family-friendly content 24/7, 365 days/year (pureflix.com), will speak the voice of truth, hope and love of Christ.”

.....  
*Steve Fedyski, COO of Pure Flix Entertainment.*

## By Nancy Schulze

“Applying knowledge gained from the Colson worldview study to my area of focus has changed the trajectory of my speaking career and launched a mission to help others understand the importance of worldview in relation to policies that affect every person around every

kitchen table in America. Good-sounding, well-intentioned ideas can turn into just the opposite in the long run. Our Founders who — almost to a one — possessed a Christian worldview, created a system that facilitated the flourishing of human potential unlike any other in the history of mankind. An opposing worldview, which has attempted to

replace their worldview, now saturates almost every aspect of culture. If we are to reclaim and rebuild America on her founding principles, Americans must understand the difference between the worldviews that drive ideas, debates and policies in this country and the world. The Colson Center is leading the way.”

.....  
*Nancy Schulze, a Colson Fellow, speaker, founder of the Congressional Wives Speakers, and co-founder (with Vonette Bright) of The American Prayer Initiative. She is the wife of nine-term Congressman Dick Schulze, retired.*



# Tributes from Colson Fellows



## By Chee Kin Tang

“The Colson Fellows program was a fantastic experience in helping me think more biblically in all areas of life. It opened my eyes as to how coherent, comprehensive and corresponding to reality Christianity is. It also challenged me to engage culture with confidence

because truth, beauty and goodness are found ultimately in Jesus Christ, through, by and for whom all things were created and hold together. The faculty and the weekend conferences were superb, as were the materials and the fellows one engages with. The program is well thought out, and will surely benefit those who seek to live *Coram Deo* [in the presence of God] and love our neighbors to Christ.”

*Chee Kin Tang, a Malaysian-born senior resources management officer at the World Bank. He is also a volunteer board member at the Rockville Pregnancy Clinic, a pro-life crisis pregnancy facility; and volunteer at LinkAcross, a nonprofit operating in Macedonia in the health care, economic development and community building sectors.*



## By Wes Lane

“Everybody has a worldview typically revealed by how and what we do. The ‘obvious’ is revealed by a kid stealing your car or Mother Teresa’s work in India. The ‘not-so-obvious’ perhaps by how a country conducts its airport screenings. It really has a lot to do with

how you value humans. Is the beggar an embarrassment or an eternal being made in the image of God? The Colson Center’s Centurions program was an ‘Aha!’ experience for me. I’d not realized my own worldview inconsistencies. Today, Oklahoma City sees Christian leaders stepping up in greater strategic unity to seek the welfare of our city (Jeremiah 29). We seek consistency in our collective ‘Christian’ worldview. Humans should flourish better because God’s kids are in town. How about your city?”

*Wes Lane, former district attorney in Oklahoma City, is the author of “Amazingly Graced: A Prosecutor Journeys Through Faith, Murder, and the Oklahoma City Bombing” (Winepress, 2010) and president of Salt and Light Leadership Training, Inc. (www.sallt.com).*

## Five questions reveal one’s worldview



## By Nancy Schulze

Your worldview is, quite simply, your view of the world. It is your belief system — the lens through which you see all of life. Everyone has a worldview, whether they’ve thought it through or not.

Your worldview is important because it drives what you think, say and do. To determine your worldview, simply answer five questions:

- How did we get here?
- What went wrong with the world?
- What will it take to fix it?
- What is my role in this life?
- Where do we go when we die?

If you are unclear about your worldview, it’s easy to fall for good-sounding ideas that may not ultimately line up with what you really believe. Lack of clarity can leave you vulnerable to someone else’s agenda and view of the world.

For decades, the worldview under which America was birthed has been under relentless pressure to give way to another worldview. Some call it “fundamental transformation.”

We are now at critical mass. At the risk of oversimplification, let’s take a brief look

at those competing worldviews. Understanding the difference is critical to the future of the country.

Karl Marx, the “father” of socialism and communism, was an avowed atheist who believed that all of life is matter — a house, the sky, an animal, you, me. No soul, no spirit, no Creator. Just matter. Marx’s idea that there is no God was helped along by Charles Darwin.

If, through an elaborate series of mutations and mistakes, man simply evolved out of a primordial swamp, Marx was home free with his idea that there is no God and man is the highest authority on the planet. What is beyond the planet? Just matter.

Marx’s answer to question two — What went wrong with the world? — was that some people *have* more than others. It’s all about the material. In communist North Korea, there are no locks on doors. Government can come into your home, unannounced, and take inventory. If you have more than your “fair share,” they can punish you and confiscate your overage.

Question three: What will it take to fix things? According to Marx, it’s the right political and economic system, where government owns the means of producing goods and services (communism) or controls them through regulation (socialism). Government collects the fruit of people’s labors, and the ruling class determines how things are redistributed so everyone is “equal.” Marx said, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”

Question four: What is my role in the world? Marx spent the better part of his life attempting to convince the world that his system was the fairest way to achieve social justice. Education was the key. He believed that man is simply a highly

developed animal that can be programmed and conditioned like Pavlov’s dog. “He who controls education controls the future.”

The last question: Where do we go when we die? Well, when you’re dead, you’re dead. Back to the primordial swamp.

The founders of America had a different view of the world.

Question one: Where did we come from? In their own words: “The Creator,” “Providence,” “the Almighty,” “our Lord.”

Question two: What went wrong with the world? Almost to a one, the founders were men of profound faith. Over half the signers of the Declaration of Independence were graduates of seminaries or Bible schools. Most were members of Orthodox Christian churches. They were highly biblically literate and had a keen understanding of man’s susceptibility to both good and evil, and how often he opts for evil.

Question three: What will it take to fix things? A government that takes into account the realities of human nature. One that would provide as much freedom as possible for man to fulfill his own destiny within the bounds of civil and moral law.

In a world where kings and emperors dictated the rights of peasants and commoners and ruled with iron fists, the founders established this country on two radical and revolutionary ideas: that all men are created equal, and that our rights don’t come from other men but from God.

For question four, the founders believed their role was to establish a country from scratch on principles that were in large part borne out of Scripture, i.e., out of their biblical worldview.

Question five, where do we go when we die? Well, they believed that depends on a few decisions you make while you’re here.

The founders’ worldview produced the

most productive and generous people the world has ever known. Ever.

Americans are a caring and compassionate people, not wanting anyone to be left behind. They responded to the call for a “War on Poverty,” which, for many, has evolved into an expectation for free health care, free birth control, etc. and now free college education. Any resistance is framed as immoral and unfair, a heartless disregard for minorities and the poor. But history has shown that the “redistributive” i.e. socialist worldview gaining traction in America has failed the poor (and everyone except the ruling class) every time it has been tried. It always results in a loss of incentive, creativity and productivity in the poor, the wealthy and those in between. And it always results in the loss of freedom.

In the move to transform America from the founders’ worldview to that of the secular left, virtually every aspect of American culture has been permeated with new “spins” on the meaning of freedom, rights, equality, justice, etc.

Education was the key, and education will be the key to reclaiming and rebuilding America on her founding principles. Those principles so unleashed the power of freedom and human potential that 200-plus years ago the American spirit was born, a spirit that has done more to raise the quality of life for more people in more places than any other country in the history of mankind. It is time for America to be America again.

*Nancy Schulze is a Colson fellow, speaker, founder of the Congressional Wives Speakers and co-founder (with Vonette Bright) of The American Prayer Initiative. She is the wife of nine-term retired congressman Dick Schulze.*



# The power of a good idea



By Dr. Everett Piper

As a college president, I have often argued that ideas have consequences. For good or for ill, ideas matter. People are unavoidably blessed or cursed by their guiding principles — by the import of their ideas. In many ways, we inevitably do practice what we preach. “[That] thing a man does practically believe ... the thing a man does practically lay to heart, and know for certain ... is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest.” (Carlyle).

I often lean toward waving a flag of danger and, thus, warning of bad ideas and the bondage and dysfunction they bring, of hedonism’s uncanny gift of deception and of the destructive consequences of what M. Scott Peck called the diabolical human mind.

Today, however, I would like to focus on the power of a good idea. Rather than bemoan those that are bad, I’d like to champion an idea that bore its fruit over 200 years ago on the streets of London. Its promoter was a young British parliamentarian named William Wilberforce, and here was his idea: God is God and we are not.

You see, Wilberforce believed that men were defined by God and not God by men. He challenged his culture for assuming it had the authority to define what was human and what was not. In the face of slavery as well as the exploitation of women and children, Wilberforce boldly and clearly said no individual had the right to define, or redefine, “a man” or delimit his or her moral worth and responsibility. Such things were God’s alone to judge.

For two decades, Wilberforce fought tirelessly in the British Parliament for his idea. He was beaten back time and again. He was ridiculed. He was accused of economic treason. He was insulted. He was ostracized. His political career suffered and was all but lost. His influence waned, and his voice was muffled. But he held fast to his idea. He relentlessly pursued it, defended it and promoted it. He believed in its power. He boldly declared that he would not be silenced. He confronted the “corruption ... of human nature” endemic in the

political system of his day, and he called “vice and wickedness” by their true names. He refused to accept politically correct definitions of sin and contrasted the hubris of government with what he called the “humiliating language of true Christianity,” i.e., the call for personal repentance and moral responsibility.

Wilberforce believed passionately in his worldview. He was confident in it as the only solution to the corruption rampant in his land. He, however, did not advocate imposing his views with force. To the contrary, he believed in the power of persuasion and the example of personal integrity. He wrote that Christians should “boldly assert the cause of Christ in an age when so many who bear the name of Christian are ashamed of Him.” Thus, he made it clear that his ideas would prevail only if they were grounded in — and proven by — the lives of those who espoused them.

Wilberforce concluded (knowing that he could commend belief but not command it) by saying: “The national difficulties we face result from the decline of religion and morality among us. I must confess equally boldly that my own solid

hopes for the well-being of my country depend not so much on her navies and armies ... as on the persuasion that she

**Wilberforce believed that men were defined by God and not God by men. He challenged his culture for assuming it had the authority to define what was human and what was not. In the face of slavery as well as the exploitation of women and children, Wilberforce boldly and clearly said no individual had the right to define, or redefine, “a man” or delimit his or her moral worth and responsibility.**

still contains many who love and obey the Gospel of Christ. I believe that their prayers may yet prevail.”

In the end, Wilberforce’s opponents were forced to concede the obvious: God defines a man and woman, and we do not. It was the victory of an idea, not one of political or military conquest (of “navies and armies”), but that of a good idea over a bad one. It was a victory of truth over lies, of freedom over slavery, of sanctification over sin.

Ideas do indeed matter, and in this case we see the power of an idea lived out in humility, balanced with integrity and measured with grace can indeed change the world. In his example, Wilberforce leaves us with the hope that in the midst of a culture that arrogantly declares, “We are as God! We can redefine right and wrong, marriage and morality, and even male and female,” the “prayers of many who love and obey the Gospel of Christ ... may yet prevail.”

.....  
Everett Piper, Ph.D., is president of Oklahoma Wesleyan University in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. He is a daily and weekly radio commentator in Tulsa and author of “The Wrong Side of the Door: Why Ideas Matter” (Oklahoma Wesleyan University Press, 2009).

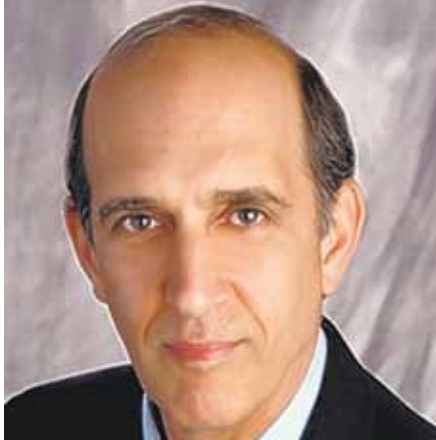


William Wilberforce (1759-1833). Engraved by E.Scriven and published in The Gallery Of Portraits With Memoirs encyclopedia, United Kingdom, 1833.

Shutterstock



# 'Resisting evil' means rising above anger



**By David Kupelian**

In considering the Wilberforce Weekend themes of “promoting good, resisting evil and restoring brokenness,” one big thing comes to mind that’s essential to accomplishing all three: giving up anger.

It’s no coincidence the word “mad” can mean both angry and insane — since becoming very angry can amount to a sort of temporary insanity, wherein we think, speak and act very differently than when we’re calm and centered.

Our anger hurts our children, breaks up families, poisons relationships, undermines businesses and wrecks our health. Truly, a great deal of evil enters this world through the portal of angry minds.

Let me share a true story about someone who embraced the opposite of anger.

Meet Richard Wurmbrand. He is the heroic Romanian evangelical pastor who spent 14 years in prison, including three in solitary confinement, and suffered starvation and torture for the crime of boldly preaching the Christian Gospel in what was then a brutally repressive, communist nation.

In 1966, two years after his final release from captivity, Wurmbrand testified before the U.S. Senate’s Internal Security Subcommittee. He stripped to the waist to reveal 18 deep wounds covering his torso, the result of years of unspeakable abuse.

And yet, as Wurmbrand explains in his classic book, “Tortured for Christ,” he and his fellow Christian prisoners understood that the communists were themselves prisoners.

So genuine was Wurmbrand’s concern for the souls of his tormentors that, over the years of his incarceration, he converted many to the Christian faith; some actually ended up in prison with him — and were glad for it!

Contemplate, if you can, Wurmbrand’s last act before leaving Romania after years of living 30 feet underground in a communist prison — no sunshine or fresh air, always hungry, treated brutally and sadistically day after day, year after year.

“In December 1965,” writes Wurmbrand, “my family and I were allowed to

leave Romania”:

“My last deed before leaving was to go to the grave of the colonel who had given the order for my arrest and who had ordered my years of torture. I placed a flower on his grave. By doing this, I dedicated myself to bringing the joys of Christ that I have to the communists who are so empty spiritually.

“I hate the communist system but I love the men. I hate the sin but I love the sinner. I love the communists with all of my heart. Communists can kill Christians but they cannot kill their love toward even those who killed them. I have not the slightest bitterness or resentment against the communists or my torturers.”

How is such an attitude possible? Explains Wurmbrand:

“I have seen Christians in communist prisons with 50 pounds of chains on their feet, tortured with red-hot iron pokers, in whose throats spoonfuls of salt had been forced, being kept afterward without water, starving, whipped, suffering from cold — and praying with fervor for the communists. This is humanly inexplicable! It is the love of Christ, which was poured out in our hearts.”

Wurmbrand shares with the reader the presence of God he experienced in his prison cell:

“God is ‘the Truth.’ The Bible is the ‘truth about the Truth.’ Theology is the

‘truth about the truth about the Truth.’ Christian people live in these many truths about the Truth, and, because of them, have not ‘the Truth.’ Hungry, beaten, and drugged, we had forgotten theology and the Bible. We had forgotten the ‘truths about the Truth,’ therefore we lived in ‘the Truth.’

“It is written, ‘The Son of man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him’ (Matthew 24:44). We could not think anymore. In our darkest hours of torture, the Son of Man came to us, making the prison walls shine like diamonds and filling the cells with light. Somewhere, far away, were the torturers below us in the sphere of the body. But the spirit rejoiced in the Lord. We would not have given up this joy for that of kingly palaces.”

Richard Wurmbrand refused to hate, choosing instead to forgive and therefore to love his tormentors. In resisting evil, he promoted goodness and helped restore the lives and souls of many broken people.

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*David Kupelian is a veteran journalist, vice president and managing editor of online news giant WND, and the bestselling author of several influential books, including “The Marketing of Evil,” “How Evil Works,” and most recently, “The Snapping of the American Mind: Healing a Nation Broken by a Lawless Government and Godless Culture.”*

## Focusing on winning the culture, not the culture war



**By Dan Smithwick**

One of my favorite books — and one I regularly challenge private schools to make mandatory faculty reading — is Dr. James Burnham’s 1964 classic, “Suicide of the West” (Encounter Books, 2014).

The book’s primary thesis is that cultures “commit suicide” when they buy into unworkable ideologies. Burnham called his book, “a set of variations on a single and simple underlying thesis, that what Americans call ‘liberalism’ is the ideology of Western suicide” (p. 26).

Even in my 1985 edition of the book, Burnham expressed his belief that

Western civilization was already nearing this tragic end.

“The contraction of the West cannot be explained by any lack of economic resources or of military and political power. We must conclude that the primary causes of the contraction of the West — not the sole causes, but the sufficient and determining causes — have been internal and non-quantitative: involving either structural changes or intellectual, moral and spiritual factors” (pp. 23, 24).

“Even today [1985], when the Western dominion has been cut to less than half of what it was in 1914, Western economic resources — real and available resources — and Western military power are still far superior to those of the non-Western regions” (p. 23).

Burnham considered World War I a tipping point.

Prior to July 1914, “the domain of Western civilization was, or very nearly was, the world,” he said, citing the Russian Revolution of 1917 as the beginning of the West’s geopolitical disintegration. In the near-century since, Western influence has steadily waned, and the moral and spiritual forces that have long undermined our society are now on public display.

“If the process continues over the next several decades more or less as it has gone on during the several decades just past, then — this is a merely mathematical extrapolation — the West will be finished; Western civilization, Western societies and nations in any significant and recognizable sense, will just not be there anymore. In that event, it will make a reasonable amount of sense to say: ‘The West committed suicide’” (pp. 24, 25).

The world has now passed through “the next several decades” Burnham wrote about, and if anything, the West is swirling faster and faster down into a Postmodernist abyss, where, in the name of multiculturalism, national identities are not harmonized but erased.

Since 1988, our Nehemiah Institute has conducted onsite worldview testing at American churches and Christian high schools, and the 7 million data points we have collected reveal an ongoing “worldview shift,” as more and more American youth reject traditional Christian values in favor of what they perceive as a more socially just system of socialism.

The picture painted is remarkably similar to what Burnham predicted in 1964. The West has become unmoored

from its Judeo-Christian heritage and is adrift in an emulsifying sea of Postmodernism, or what author Chris Stefanick calls “absolute relativism.”

My organization would not conduct such testing if we thought all hope was lost.

Neither are we content to watch American conservatives fight cultural battles at the polls when they’ve already lost their children in the classroom and on the Internet. We truly believe that our great Land of the Free can be restored ... if we’ll focus on winning the culture, not the culture war.

My colleague, James Gilbert, co-founder of our sister organization, worldviewguys.com, has observed that “a sleeping man never sets his own alarm.” To that end, the aim of the Worldview Guys is not to sound a call to man the lifeboats, but to grab an oar, so that together we can guide America’s youth back to better, brighter shores. Ours is a big boat, and it flies the flag of the Cross. We hope you’ll join us.

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*Dan Smithwick is the founder of NehemiahInstitute.com, a nonprofit organization specializing since 1986 in worldview assessment and curriculum for churches and high schools. He can be reached at smithwickdan@gmail.com.*



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