

JULY 2020

Christian Health Care Newsletter

When one suffers, we all suffer

from Samaritan Leadership



THIS HAS BEEN a difficult time for so many of us as we try to process and respond in Christ-honoring ways to the events taking place across our nation and in our cities and neighborhoods.

With the tragic and needless death of George Floyd, we have one more painful reminder that injustice is alive and well in parts of our society. We know that there is a depth of hurt and sadness many are experiencing right now, on staff and among our members. For those who are hurting, the leadership at Samaritan Ministries wants to say that we see you. You are dearly loved. And we will move forward together.

As followers of Jesus, we know that the problems we are facing can be traced back to the sin in our hearts. We also know that the lasting hope we are looking for is found in Jesus Christ and His Gospel, which leads us to reconciliation with God and one another. We believe that if God can

continued on page 12

Samaritan™
MINISTRIES

This Month's Newsletter

- 1 **When one suffers, we all suffer**
- 3 **Get your \$250 Healthcare Bluebook fair price reward**
- 4 **Moving from lament to leadership: George Floyd, the Gospel, and our response**
- 6 **Member Spotlight**
Mike Donehey: Tenth Avenue North
- 8 **How hospitals could become a thing of the past**
- 10 **No social media algorithm rewards grace**
- 15 **Prayer for the Persecuted Church**
- 16 **The Doorpost**
Prayers that impress God

Member Letter:

HEALTHCARE BLUEBOOK
HELPED US GET A FAIR PRICE

Our son Caleb was eating popcorn and decided to stick a kernel up his nose. We couldn't get it out and had to take him to an acute care center.

We thought the bill was too high, so we checked Healthcare Bluebook. We sent a letter with estimates of what the treatment should cost and a check for \$350. The hospital accepted the payment and took \$500 off the bill.

**Kevin & Lesli
WISCONSIN**



Sharing Summary | June 2020

NEEDS

\$30,011,595

IN NEGOTIATIONS

\$11,700,000

SHARES

\$30,011,595

MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS

80,843

Contact Us | 877-764-2426 | Dash.SamaritanMinistries.org

QUESTIONS ABOUT?

Your medical need
Shares you are sending or receiving
Your membership

EMAIL

needs@samaritanministries.org
membership@samaritanministries.
membership@samaritanministries.

PHONE MENU

1-1
1-2
1-3

Have a Need? Use the Health Resources App on Dash



- Compare quality and cost of health care services in your area using Healthcare Bluebook. Receive a \$250 reward when you submit a screenshot showing you chose a green fair-price provider.
- Use MediBid to receive bids from doctors for tests or treatments you are seeking.
- Email a medical professional or call a nurse (*free*), or call a doctor who can write a prescription (\$25).
- Access discount tools for prescriptions and lab tests.

Send a note. Pay your share. Always stay alert in prayer.

EDITORS

Jed Stuber, Editor
Michael Miller, Managing Editor
Ray King, Editor Emeritus

CONTACT US

newsletter@
samaritanministries.org

FOLLOW US

Facebook: Samaritan Ministries
Instagram: @samaritanmin
Twitter: @samaritanmin

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

PO Box 3618, Peoria, IL 61612
telephone: 309-689-0442
telephone (*toll free*): 877-764-2426
fax: 309-689-0764

The Christian Health Care Newsletter is published monthly by Samaritan Ministries International, a 501(c)(3) charity. Subscriptions to the Christian Health Care Newsletter are available to non-members for a suggested donation of \$12 per year. The information provided is for educational purposes and is not meant as medical advice.

Get your \$250 Healthcare Bluebook fair-price reward

Simply submit a screenshot from Healthcare Bluebook with your bills indicating that you chose a green, fair-price provider

USING HEALTHCARE BLUEBOOK to compare cost and quality ratings before you see a provider is one of the most important ways you can steward your fellow members' Shares, and now you can receive a \$250 reward for choosing a green fair-price provider.

Pricing information is often hidden in health care, and cash-paying patients can be charged up to 12 times more than other payers. That's why negotiating large "discounts" after service usually doesn't result in fair pricing. But Healthcare Bluebook gives you the pricing information you need to compare cost and quality of providers near you. Knowledge is power.

When you do your part to help keep the monthly Share affordable, you will now receive a \$250 check. Simply take a screenshot

demonstrating that you chose one of Healthcare Bluebook's green "fair-price" providers and submit it with your bills. Samaritan staff will review it with your Need to make sure it qualifies for the reward.

Here are some important details:

- To be eligible for the reward, the bill has to be for procedures, tests, or services listed on Healthcare Bluebook. Doctor's visits and therapy are not eligible.
- Bills must have dates of service July 1 and forward.
- You may only receive one \$250 reward per Need, even if you choose fair-price providers for several different bills on that Need.

Healthcare Bluebook is also releasing a new fair-price "concierge" feature that may

appear depending on your area and the specific treatment you are seeking, especially if it is a surgery. If you call the number on the screen and work with Healthcare Bluebook's concierge, you will qualify for the \$250 fair-price reward automatically.

Samaritan Ministries will be doing a six month experiment with the fair-price reward, and we want every member to log in to your Dash account and use Healthcare Bluebook to help keep the Share as affordable as possible. For more details about the fair-price reward, visit SamaritanMinistries.org/reward. ♦♦♦

Get your \$250 reward...

Healthcare Bluebook

Compare quality and cost of health care in your area.



Log in at Dash.SamaritanMinistries.org and go to Health Resources

Moving from lament to leadership: George Floyd, the Gospel, and our response



by Chris Brooks
Pastor of Woodside
Bible Church & Host of
Moody Radio's *Equipped*

AS THE DUST clears over the Minneapolis skyline and other cities around our country, and the embers begin to fade from the blaze of yet another heartbreaking page in the story of human fallenness, we are all left with the aching cry of Maranatha! This one word sums up our deepest longings when God, in His sovereignty, allows the veil to be lifted from our eyes causing us to see the sheer depths of human depravity.

The filmed pain of the injustice committed against Mr. George Floyd has only been compounded by the ugliness of burning buildings and wounded cities. This should cause any true believer to long for Christ's return. As we witness clashes between people and police, we are reminded this world is not our home. So, our souls cry, "Maranatha ... Come Lord Jesus!" But for now, we, His Church, are left to look forward to His return while grappling with the question, "How now shall we live?"

In the wake of injustice we often find ourselves asking familiar questions like, "What can we do to personally address the evil of injustice?" and "How can we show our

neighbors the grace and truth of the Gospel in the face of such pain and brokenness?" These questions are only intensified when we see 24-hour news cycles of civil unrest across our country.

When we see young people gathered in our streets, I believe we should agree with the sentiment Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. expressed in his September 27, 1966, interview with then CBS reporter Mike Wallace, "Riots are the language of the unheard." The images of our brothers and sisters in Christ expressing such deep hurt, pain, and frustration should cause us to ask ourselves, "What aren't we hearing?" We must acknowledge nonviolent, peaceful protests have been a very useful tool for addressing inequities in our society. But it should break our hearts whenever these peaceful protests are hijacked by looters and those who desire to instigate further violence. They have no genuine love for the communities who are hurting, because destruction will never produce the true justice our hearts long for. Yet, if we are humble, we must also admit these types of civil unrest do teach us something about our hurting neighbors. They reveal the historical depths of penned up lament.

While we must condemn looting and violence in the aftermath of

the unjust killing of Mr. George Floyd, we must affirm that lamenting is Biblical. Buried underneath the headlines of the riots are the untold stories of image-bearers who are deeply grieved by the types of abuse of power that killed Mr. Floyd. And by the apathy of leaders who refuse to address the injustice they and their children face on a daily basis. These men and women cry out to God in lament. Our Bibles are full of Psalms of Lament (Psalms 44, 60, 74, 75, 79, 80, etc.).

Lament is a uniquely Christian action. It is the act of taking our sorrows to God when our pain is tempting us to run from Him. All laments begin with God's people bringing our complaints before the Lord. They then progress to us petitioning God boldly in prayer, that He would hear our cries for justice and our pleas for His intervention on behalf of the mistreated. Christian lament is grounded in a deep abiding trust in the character of God.

Ultimately, our lament drives us from our knees to our feet in action, compelled by love to be difference-makers in our communities for Christ. The Lord reminds us in our anger and grief that we are His ambassadors. We have been entrusted with the task of being His witnesses in both word

and deed. Lamenting, though Biblical, is not enough. We cannot afford to live in unending lament. We must act redemptively to fix what is broken, to leverage the power of our voices against injustice, to exchange our comfort for solidarity with the wounded, and to bring truth, beauty, and justice to our communities wherever it is missing. So, what do we do now? Where do we go from here?

Today, I write to help answer these questions. To give some guidance on how you and I can make a difference in the face of injustice. You see, after we have pushed back the distractions of the unproductive responses of some, we are left with the sobering

Lament is the act of taking our sorrows to God when our pain is tempting us to run from Him. We bring our complaints to God and then progress to boldly petitioning that He would hear our cries for justice.

reality that this moment demands Christians to act. We must all press beyond the overwhelming feelings of inadequacy that come when we are confronted by injustice of this magnitude. Do not let distance in geography or difference in

ethnicity cause you to think there is nothing you can do. While the list of positive proactive steps we can take to address the underlying causes of injustice are endless, I suggest there are four enduring actions every believer should take now as we seek to live out our faith and to love our neighbors.

Four enduring actions every believer should take

Show solidarity with the victims of injustice. Throughout scripture we see God identifies in a unique and special way with the oppressed and mistreated. Although Liberation Theologians will misrepresent this truth in an unhealthy and disproportionate manner, what is undeniable is the Bible makes it clear that to bless the poor and mistreated is to bless God Himself. For example, consider Proverbs 14:31, which says, "Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors Him."

The Gospel also makes it clear Christ expects His followers to take on this same characteristic of loving and identifying with the hurting and abused. Hebrews 11:25 says about Moses, "He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin." You and I are called to do the same. This is simply to say we must avoid the temptation of looking away when our brothers and sisters, who may live in very different social situations from us, are crying out over their pain and mistreatment.

Historically the Church has found this easy to do when it comes to international missions

but much harder when it comes to hurting communities in our own backyard. We must look with equal concern upon the pain of others who are geographically near us and listen to their stories. When Christ-followers ignore those who live under the weight of injustice, we ensure the evils that victimize them will perpetuate. The greatest way to end systemic injustice is surprisingly simple: it is for Christians to model the character of God by showing solidarity with those whose stories our society so often dismisses. Demonstrating this type of solidarity becomes very practical and uncomplicated when we understand it is shown primarily through friendship and hospitality. By opening our hearts and homes and entering loving relationships with diverse groups of people, we are able to hear their stories, feel their pains, and offer them the hope of Christ. We may shed tears with our friends when they encounter injustices we ourselves are not exposed to. But in doing so we become more authentic witnesses of God's grace in Christ to them.

Speak up. This may be the simplest but, in many ways, hardest thing for us to do. Let's be honest, speaking up on behalf of others who are suffering injustice is risky. It is not convenient to use our voices and social platforms on behalf of the unborn, for those who are trapped in human trafficking, and victims of domestic violence, sexism, racism, or police brutality. What if our friends do not agree

continued on page 12

Member Spotlight

Mike Donehey Tenth Avenue North

by Michael Miller



Member Mike Donehey

TenthAvenueNorth.com; mikedonehey.tumblr.com

Twitter @tenthavenorth; @mikedonehey

Facebook @tenthavenuenorth

Instagram @tenthavenuenorth

MIKE DONEHEY HAS had lots of “Aha!” moments, and now we get to learn from them.

The lead singer and co-founder of the soon-to-say-farewell Christian band Tenth Avenue North has written *Finding God’s Life for My Will: His Presence is the Plan*. The book unfolds as a spiritual autobiography, charting Mike’s growth as a believer while also sharing lessons he learned at key points in his life—those “Aha!” moments.

The result is a peek inside a successful singer-songwriter’s beginnings as both a believer and a musician as well as the struggles he faces and has faced with various aspects of the Christian life. Examples of chapter titles are “42 Trips to the Principal’s Office,” “The Leader Label Lie,” “I Stopped Asking God to Use Me,” and “I Still Don’t Know What I’m Doing (*Maybe I’m Not Supposed To*).”

The book came from writing he would do while on tour with the band.

“I just decided I’ve got lots of things I want to say, so I might as well just drill ‘em down while I’m flying, then it doesn’t take away from my home time with my wife,

Kelly, and my four daughters,” Mike says.

He didn’t realize he had a book until a book agent said he did.

“It seems so audacious to say, ‘I’m going to write a book!’” Mike says. “It was more just these thoughts and observations I’ve

I have a unique perspective having played in thousands of churches of every denomination ... a birds-eye view of what a lot of people seem to wrestle with—myself included.

been feeling for years and years. I feel like I have a unique perspective having toured the country for over 15 years and playing in thousands of churches of every denomina-

tion. It gives me maybe a unique, birds-eye view of the Church and what things a lot of people seem to wrestle with—myself included.”

For example, Mike says he continues to face challenges of balancing ministry and family.

“You have to be constantly willing to make hard decisions,” he says. “Three years ago, my wife, Kelly, says, ‘You’ve got to cut the number of shows you’re doing in half.’ I said OK. My first feeling is, ‘Well, our kids are going to eat half as many meals, so I don’t know how we’re going to provide.’ But you choose what’s right for your family and what your capacity is and then trust that God will, in health, allow you to minister to the people He wants you to minister to.”

Mike says that for many Christians in entertainment or ministry, it’s the opposite.

“It’s like, ‘This is what God has called me to. The family’s just along for the ride,’” he says. “‘If I can be there for my family, cool. If not, it doesn’t matter, because I’m doing what God has called me to do.’ I would say there’s a tension of two truths, of where Jesus says in Luke 14 (*paraphrasing*), ‘Hey, if you’re not

willing to leave your family in the name of Jesus, you're not worthy of Me.' But then Paul turns around and says in 1 Timothy 5 (*paraphrasing*), 'If a guy doesn't take care of his wife and kids, he's worse than an unbeliever.'

"So you have this tension of loving the people that God's put closest to you, and that's where I go with proximity, that's how your time and energy ought to look. Like I ought to put the most time and energy into my wife and

kids, and then corresponding circles outward."

In one of those circles is Tenth Avenue North, started in the early 2000s by Mike and other students at Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida. After eight albums, several Dove Awards and nominations, and multiple tours, the group is disbanding after a farewell tour this fall.

Mike says other members of the group had been stepping down for the past year and a half to be

home more or branch off into other careers. He was the one left standing.

"So everyone decided they wanted to be off the road and that kind of left me, and I could have kept the brand of the band going and hired a bunch of new people, but, to me, that feels dishonoring in a way to the other members, so I'll most likely be moving forward just putting out music in my own

continued on page 14

Why Samaritan Ministries?

Mike Donehey says he and other members of Tenth Avenue North became aware of Samaritan Ministries when "this guy named Dustin just kind of hounded us."

He's referring to Dustin Garrett, who represented Samaritan Ministries on three Winter Jam tours. Tenth was on one of those tours when they learned about health care sharing through SMI.

"Our financial manager goes, 'Hey, have you talked to Dustin about this health care sharing?'" Mike says. "We said, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah.' She said, 'Well, I just talked it all through with him. It's kind of awesome.' She started explaining how you send your Shares directly to other people and pray for them and send them notes. That felt a whole lot like the way it was meant to be Biblically. On top of that, it was just dramatically cheaper than what we were paying every month to have health insurance through the band."

In the end, everybody in the band joined.

"I didn't care for insurance," lead guitarist Jeff Owen says. "I was open to a new option. Health insurance kind of seems like a monopoly, like

it's this way or no way, so the thought behind Samaritan seemed really intriguing, to be part of a community and ministry."

The Donehey family's one Need went well, Mike says. Nora, one of his and Kelly's four daughters, broke her arm. The experience of getting discounts and receiving checks from other members "was awesome."

"It's absolutely different having the personal connection to other people and other people's needs," he says. "How different is it than getting a statement from your insurance company? You get a handwritten card saying, 'Hey, we're praying for your daughter's arm and here's the check.' It's not really comparable. It's like other humans are actually in it with you as opposed to, like, a robot."

Jeff says their membership has gone well so far.

"It's cool when you're sending the Share," he says. "It doesn't feel like you're just writing a check to a business to pay a premium. It's more personal than that. It's going straight to somebody who has a Need." ◆◆◆

How hospitals could become a thing of the past

from Healthline.com

Experts say a move toward decentralized care could make hospitals obsolete. Urgent care clinics are changing how health care is delivered. There's a trend toward people, especially the elderly, being taken care of at home.

TYPICALLY, WHEN YOU'RE sick, hurt, or not feeling well, you go to a hospital to see a doctor. In the near future, that won't necessarily be the case: The United States medical system has become increasingly expensive and too often dangerous to one's health.

That's why some are actively trying to change things.

Dan Paull, MD, CEO of Easy Orthopedics based out of Colorado Springs, says the current U.S. health care industry is terrible for both patients and doctors.

He says his business involves transparent pricing and cash payments, a system that avoids the usual bureaucracy that typically comes with insurance companies and hospitals.

At his office, he says, no one gets surprised with paying \$100 for an aspirin.

"Hospitals are using an old business model," Paull told Healthline. "They want to trap as much care as they can while bankrupting people."

That's important to note, as two-thirds of all Americans who declare bankruptcy have cited

medical reasons. Those can include cost of care as well as how their medical conditions left them unable to work.

In 2018, a third of the \$3.6 trillion spent on health care went to hospitals, while 20 percent went to physicians and clinics, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

And while hospitals are often thought as places to heal, they're also common sites where people get sicker or even die.

Johns Hopkins Medicine reported in 2016 that more than 250,000 people in the United States die each year from medical errors, making those mistakes the third-leading cause of death behind heart disease and cancer.

Those numbers are just some of the reasons why centralized, "everything under one roof" hospitals may become a thing of the past, as the U.S. health care system continues to transform itself to meet patient needs.

What is decentralized care?

For some reason, as hospitals evolved to treat the whole body,

the teeth and gums remained a specialty.

That's why their care takes place in smaller, self-contained dentist offices that handle everything in-house, from X-rays to surgery.

It's only one example of care long removed from hospitals that few would associate with them. That's because they're outpatient procedures, meaning they don't need beds to house people overnight.

Experts say populated areas still need hospitals, specifically for large-scale emergencies, that are primarily focused on immediate medical issues and traumas, such as a natural disaster or disease outbreak.

That would include an emergency room, some operating rooms, and an intensive care unit.

That's because there are many common procedures that don't require overnight stays but are still often associated with hospital visits.

These include imaging, dialysis, physical rehabilitation, inoculations, and simple IV transfusions.

The modern idea of central-

ized care in the United States didn't begin until the 1800s, when hospice—caring for the dying—transitioned into improving care and helping people live longer.

Since then, hospital buildings have gotten bigger, and the costs have gotten higher.

To some experts, it's an inevitable domino effect.

David Duncan, PhD, a faculty member for Walden University's PhD in Health Services program, has worked in senior leadership positions in the health care industry for 40 years.

"The hospital industry isn't even 200 years old and it's dramatically changing," he told Healthline. "It's engaging in creative self-destruction, and they're trying to pull themselves apart before anyone else does."

Part of that self-destruction, Duncan says, are advances in medical hardware and software, along with artificial intelligence helping advance diagnostics.

They make simple procedures and screenings outside of hospitals easier and more affordable.

"Just about every service can be taken out of the hospital," Duncan said.

That includes the emergence of critical care clinics in larger cities and the inclusion of health clinics inside Walmarts.

In addition, Amazon wants to keep its employee care in-house and routine things such as flu shots being available at Walgreens, CVS, and other pharmacies.

That's part of the decentralization. Meanwhile, major health systems have been trying to keep a monopoly on care.

Louis Levitt, MD, MEd, vice president and orthopedic surgeon for the Centers for Advanced Orthopaedics in Maryland and an assistant clinical professor in the department of orthopedics at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., says health care has already "radically changed in the last five years, even if patients didn't notice."

That includes large hospital systems merging and acquiring smaller systems.

"There's a race to see who can roll up primary care physicians," Levitt told Healthline.

But he says outpatient surgery centers, "concierge clinics," and telemedicine can provide a better, faster patient experience at a lower cost to deliver evidence-based and data-driven medicine.

"It's going to be quick in and quick out at the lowest price," he said.

The long haul

For care that isn't meant to be quick, there's meeting people where they are, just like the iconic image of the rural doctor showing up to someone's bedside with a leather bag and stethoscope.

But there's going to be a lot of technology in that bag.

Lenny Verkhogla, MBA, CFE, is the founder of Executive Care, a full-service home health care company serving seniors, disabled, and recovering individuals with the goal of keeping them safe and independent in their own home.

"We want to prevent people from going back to the hospital," Verkhogla told Healthline. "The longer someone is in the hospital,

the more likely they are to contract a disease they didn't come in for."

That's because repeatedly visiting the hospital is not only expensive for the individual person and taxing on the health care system, but it often leads to shorter life spans.

So, companies such as Executive Care look for red flags in people over the age of 65 who are readmitted to the hospital soon after they were last released.

Instead, they send skilled nurses into those people's homes and use gadgets like pulse and blood pressure monitors linked to the internet.

"Cost is very important, but people don't want to go to the hospital," Verkhogla said. "They want to stay at home."

Doctors can't say how much most procedures will cost a patient, as it's behind the scenes negotiating between the hospital and the insurance companies, but they also want to honor their oath to their patients.

Which is why some medical professionals in larger health care systems are actively finding ways to reclaim their lost autonomy and offer lower-priced care because they operate with much less overhead.

That, many experts agree, is taking patient care outside of large hospitals and meeting people where they are to keep costs down.

"It makes sense that hospitals should decentralize," Paull said. "You don't need to go to the hospital for many things." ♦♦♦

Copyright 2020 HealthLine.com. Reprinted by permission. <healthline.com/health-news/changing-healthcare-industry-makes-hospitals-obsolete#The-long-haul>

No social media algorithm rewards grace

by Chris Martin

IN THE DECEMBER 2019 issue of *The Atlantic*, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt and technology-ethics writer Tobias Rose-Stockwell concluded an article titled “The Dark Psychology of Social Media” with the following thoughts:

If we want our democracy to succeed—indeed, if we want the idea of democracy to regain respect in an age when dissatisfaction with democracies is rising—we’ll need to understand the many ways in which today’s social-media platforms create conditions that may be hostile to democracy’s success. And then we’ll have to take decisive action to improve social media.

Social-media platforms have transformed over time to reward mob mentalities instead of civil discourse. Haidt and Rose-Stockwell go so far as to say that today’s social-media platforms “create conditions that may be hostile to democracy’s success.”

Likewise, today’s social-media platforms create conditions that may be hostile to considerate, Christlike communication. While social media can be a place to learn and grow in our Christian faith, it often feels like a black hole, resembling an endless void of darkness that can’t be penetrated by any kind of light.

What are Christians to do? Abandon social media because

of its problems? Go to battle for Christianity and the gospel against any and all combatants who assail the name of Jesus online?

Managing social media for a large Christian organization, I see Christians shine the bright light of the Gospel and mercilessly eviscerate others online every single day. I fear many of us have fallen into feedback loops created by algorithms intended to generate engagement, and have lost sight of our calling to be known by our mutual love (*John 13:34–35*).

What changed

The early years of social media were dedicated to connecting friends. It wasn’t much more complicated than that. There were no “time-lines,” “news feeds,” or other steady streams of content on the earliest social-media platforms. Users had profiles, and communication between users occurred on those profiles or in private messages.

But the social-media landscape changed dramatically in 2009 with two major additions: Facebook’s algorithm and Twitter’s “Retweet” button. Haidt and Rose-Stockwell observe the following about these innovations:

The News Feed’s algorithmic ordering of content flattened the hierarchy of credibility. Any post by any producer could stick to the top of our feeds as long as it generated engagement. . . .

The Retweet button essentially enabled the frictionless spread of content. A single click could pass someone else’s tweet on to all of your followers—and let you share in the credit for contagious content.

These features, and the eventual addition of others like Facebook’s version of a retweet—the “Share” button—laid the groundwork for the polarization already present in our hearts to take center stage in our public discourse and, indeed, our entire culture.

These methods of engagement are functionally social reward systems. Likes, comments, shares, retweets, and other forms of affirmation act as “points” in a gamified sociological landscape, both literally within the algorithms that govern these platforms and figuratively in the sociological architecture of the internet.

No social-media algorithm rewards grace. Encouraging tweet threads aren’t shared as much as angry ones. “Cancel culture” thrives because the reward systems and algorithms support mobs, and most mobs are angry. We are more eager to share negative content because fear and anger push us to action more than love.

Social-media conflict within the Body of Christ helps no one because there’s no public incentive to resolve it. Until the conflict

is taken offline or to a private online space, all parties involved are performing for their followers, whether they think about it or not. No one gets retweets for conceding ground, only for holding it.

Few Christians have difficulty communicating the truth of the gospel on social media. We have that nailed down. Yet so many of us struggle to communicate the truth of Christ with the love of Christ on social media.

Social media as spiritual battleground

Why are we so prone to give a listening ear to “discernment” blogs? Why do we foam at the mouth to cancel the celebrity who steps out of line? Why do we cheer on, either aloud or in our hearts, the ideological gladiator we love most in the digital colosseum?

Sin.

Our sinful hearts lead us either to sign up as gladiators for social-media warfare, or to willingly punch our tickets, grab our popcorn, and watch the madness. In our sin, we love a good fight. We love seeing the people we believe are wrong “put in their place” by the people we believe are right.

Simply, we’re prideful. Social media is yet another place to feel triumphant. We just want to win.

We must see social media less as an ideological battleground on which we demonstrate our spiritual prowess and more as a spiritual battleground on which we demonstrate our ideological humility. We ought to listen more and post less. Social media can be a tremendous tool as an extension of incarnational ministry, but it can

be a lethal weapon in our efforts to simultaneously display the love of Christ.

So what do we do?

Practically, what are Christians to do on social media? One option is to log off completely. We’re not being faithless if we opt out of shining Gospel light online. There is no ministerial obligation to participate in social media. If you can’t figure out a way to use social media to glorify God and point others to Him, your soul and the church will be best served if you log off.

But what if you want to stick around? How can Christians use social media in constructive ways that point folks to the glory of God and the overflow of that glory in our world?

1. Share the beauty of life Are you a gifted photographer? Take beautiful pictures of the world around you and share them with the world, reminding your audience of the God behind the creation you capture in your photos. Are you a gifted cook? Create a cooking social-media account devoted to the craft of cooking, celebrating the diverse tastes the Lord has gifted us.

We can use social media to share the beauty of life while pointing our followers to the God behind all that beauty.

2. Celebrate goodness and righteousness It’s pretty trendy to bemoan injustice on social media. People tend to be motivated by anger more than they are by joy, so posts about how awful the world is tend to get far more attention than

other kinds of posts.

Perhaps we need more believers celebrating the justice and righteousness we see in our world. Tell stories of the goodness you come across in a given day. Share stories of service and selflessness in your community. Point people to the God of all goodness and righteousness.

3. Manifest kindness Again, we’ll be known by our love for one another—or lack thereof. All of us need encouragement from time to time. Use social media to send encouraging notes to people.

Can you find your favorite author on Twitter? Mention the author and tell him or her how you see God working in their writing. Are you friends with your pastor or small-group leader on Facebook? Take 10 minutes out of your lunch hour one day and write up an encouraging Facebook message to that person.

Be kind to others. Be generous. Let the love of Christ overflow in your online world.

Gospel light

Social media isn’t going away. Perhaps the light of the Gospel can penetrate the darkness of the social internet.

Let’s shine it and see what happens. ♦♦♦

Copyright © 2020 Gospel Coalition. Reprinted by permission. <thegospelcoalition.org/article/social-media-algorithm-rewards-grace/>

Chris Martin is manager of social media at LifeWay Christian Resources, and he serves on staff at his church as leader of the student ministry.

tear down the hostility between Jew and Gentile and make “one new man” in Christ (Ephesians 2), He can bring healing and unity among all of us today. This reconciliation in Christ—and the healing it brings—is the task of the Body of Christ.

At Samaritan Ministries, our mission is to be a community of Christians who care for one another during times of medical illness. In our focus on that mission, we are cautious in responding to headlines or shifting cultural or political winds. However, to us, this situation is more than a headline. Members in our community are grieving, and Scripture says, “If one member suffers, all suffer together” (1 Corinthians 12:26). We are suffering together right now.

At the same time, we reject the violence threatening lives and property across the U.S., often in communities of color that have

already suffered disproportionately. The Scriptures are clear: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

To go forward, we heed the guidance of Scripture: “... let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger” (James 1:19). Our staff is learning this firsthand. We are asking God to help us more fully reflect Jesus and His kingdom in our community. Recently, we gathered virtually to participate in a conversation between two of our senior leaders. This conversation was a time of listening and seeking to understand, of letting the Holy Spirit work in our hearts to help us see things from each other’s experiences.

Our Chief Information Officer, Will Cooper, who has been on the receiving end of racial injustice, reminded us of how essential Christian love is during these times when he said, “We have

to start our dialogue with love. Everything we do needs to be in love, for hate is the fuel for racism.” He continued by saying, “In Christ, humanity is free—we can all demonstrate the kindness of treating every person as our fellow human of equal worth. We need to love our neighbor and understand our neighbor’s perspective. Remember, we don’t all have the same experiences. However, all of us deserve to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.”

We long for the day when that great multitude of saints “that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” (Revelation 7:9) join in love and unity and worship before our Savior Jesus Christ.

Let’s keep giving ourselves to humble listening, learning, loving, and reconciling toward that glorious day—together, as one Body in Jesus Christ. ♦♦♦

or understand? What if speaking up means we must break with some of the narrative we learned as a child about other groups of people? What if speaking up causes us to risk losing acceptance within our social group? You see, this is exactly what makes doing justice so difficult: it requires risk. However, nothing is more healing to those who are suffering injustice than the voices of their friends being lifted on their behalf.

Again, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famously said, “In the end we will remember not the words of our

enemies, but the silence of our friends.” We live in an extraordinary time marked by the power of social media platforms, which enables each of us to bring light to issues that grieve the heart of God. As stewards of His grace, we must leverage these platforms to fight all injustice. I encourage you to use social media as a tool for good. We can also speak up by correcting the inappropriate thinking of our family and friends. They may not listen to those who are experiencing injustice directly, but they will hear us. By speaking up on behalf

of others like Mr. George Floyd, we are fulfilling Proverbs 31:8-9, which commands us to, “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

Support people and projects that are making a difference. Although we may have a burden to see a form of injustice end, it doesn’t mean we have the expertise to effectively address it ourselves. This is because it takes more

than passion to fix the problem. However, we can praise God for and partner with those who have studied, trained, and equipped themselves to fight on the front lines against injustice. By investing our generosity into the people and projects that are making a difference, we join in the fight against injustice. When we use our resources to support those who are addressing the injustices in our community, we demonstrate the love of Christ. Likewise, when we withhold our generosity, we are withholding the love of God. This is exactly what the Apostle John expresses in 1 John 3:17, which states, "But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?"

Remember, God has blessed us so that we can bless others. You may not be called by God to become an expert in overturning legislation that hurts the unborn, a domestic abuse counselor, or an advocate for victims of police brutality, but you can invest into those who are called in these areas. So, let us use our generosity as a weapon of love in the hand of God to fight injustice in our community.

Share the Gospel. This by far is the most important action we must take as disciples of Christ. As Christians, we must never forget God's ultimate answer to the world's cries for justice is the cross of Christ. In this world the best we can hope for is legal justice, which is so often elusive. The hurting are left feeling even more bitter and vulnerable to abuse. The outlook

for the offender is bleak. Once the public knows the identities of those who have been the perpetrators of injustice, they face the tidal wave of vitriol, retaliation, and condemnation. However, it is at

Lament drives us from our knees to our feet in action, compelled by love to be difference-makers in our communities for Christ.

the cross where justice, mercy, and forgiveness meet.

You see, people everywhere desperately need Jesus. This is true for both the victims and the victimizers of injustice, for Mr. George Floyd and for the police who unjustifiably killed him. The good news of the Gospel is there is grace for everyone at the foot of the cross. The people of our communities need the healing and redemption that is found in Christ alone. We are witnesses of His life-transforming, heart-healing grace. But what good is a witness who pleads the Fifth? The Gospel is to be shared! We must share it with our spouses and children, our friends, our neighbors and yes, even our enemies. Praise the Lord that while we were yet enemies of God, He sent Christ to save us.

As the dust clears over countless cities across our nation and we reflect on the painful events of this week, we are left to realize there are no winners. Mr. George Floyd has lost his life. People of Color have had their fears and frustration reignited. Good law enforcement agents (*representing the*

vast majority) across our country have had the reputation of their profession bruised because of the unjust actions of a few bad ones. Cities are burning. Young people feel hopeless. And, while we cry

Maranatha and wait for our Lord's return, we must never forget the Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation for ALL who believe! So, let us proclaim it with boldness and faithfulness until Christ's return. May cities be healed, sinners saved, and may justice roll down like a river! ♦♦♦

Copyright © 2020 Woodside Bible Church. Reprinted by permission. <bit.ly/2Usv1m> This article is the second in a two-part series. See part one at bit.ly/2XO4fDT.

Chris Brooks is Senior Pastor of Woodside Bible Church, a multisite congregation across the metro-Detroit area. He hosts "Equipped" on Moody Radio, which is also available online at moodyradio.org/programs/equipped-with-chris-brooks. Chris is the author of *Kingdom Dreaming* and *Urban Apologetics*.

name," Mike says.

Lead guitarist Jeff Owen, also a Samaritan member, says he'll continue to write songs for other artists.

"I'm just diving full steam into that and hoping God keeps shining light on the path in front of me," Jeff says. "The objective is to come off the road and spend more time at home."

His 15 years with Tenth, though, were "an awesome journey."

"I think Mike and I wanted it to end well and not just kind of dissolve," Jeff says. "We wanted to plan it out and celebrate what God's given us for more than a decade."

Mike says he also is already writing new songs and is working on an outline for a new book as well.

"I've been writing songs with new friends and people, just sort of gathering content," he says.

Through those years of working in Tenth Avenue North—named after an east-west road in West Palm Beach—and, previously, as a worship leader at a local church, Mike has had to come to terms with being well-known.

"It's funny, because when I worked at a big church, I felt more famous than I do as a traveling musician," he says. "I worked at a big church, and everyone in town knew who I was. In some ways, traveling around, you feel more like a gypsy as it were. A traveling entity. But for the times someone comes up to me at a coffee shop and goes, 'Hey, I read your book' or 'I listened to your record' or 'I saw this thing of you online,' it's really wild, especially for musicians.

"It's a little strange. My job is to humanize myself wherever anyone



Tenth Avenue North bandmates Ruben Juarez, Mike Donehey, and Jeff Owen.

has idolized me, being vulnerable and being honest about my failures."

Mike says that it's important that well-known people in ministry stay authentic.

"A lot of times I'll watch different Christian celebrities, and they just always are 'on'—always clean, always produced, always edited, always made up, and just looking perfect, sounding perfect," Mike says. "In a way, I don't think this really helps people. The Bible is really honest about its heroes. I think that's why it's so trustworthy, because it shows you every which way they've failed and screwed up. It takes a lot of pressure off when you can live honestly and openly. I think it actually helps people have more belief that the grace of God is for them when we who are in the spotlight are more honest about our own mistakes."

Mike defines success as something other than fame.

"If I help anyone move out of shame through the music I've made and toward a belief that God loves them, that is absolute success," he says. "Success for any of us is intimacy with God, but we try to hack the system by seeking

fame. When you ask to be rich and famous, what you're really asking for is to be known and loved. It's like getting famous is a quick, easy way to do that.

"I remember praying that prayer when I was a theater major in high school: 'God, make me famous for Your glory.' Almost like God is going, 'You know, you don't realize this, but what you're really asking is to be known and loved. If I answered your prayer, I wouldn't actually be answering your prayer, because your prayer is something different than what you're asking for, whether you know it or not.'"

Friendships help to keep his spirit in the right place.

"Obviously, I need deep friendships with people who don't love me for what I'm going to do for them," he says. "I need really honest friends who will tell me the truth about myself and who also will let me have space to feel and fail." ♦♦♦

Prayer for the Persecuted Church

Detained pastor released in India

An American pastor detained in India since October 2019 has returned home, International Christian Concern reports. Pastor Bryan Nerren was falsely accused of violating India's Foreign Exchange Management Act when he entered the country for conferences. The American Center for Law and Justice says he was targeted after he told customs agents he was a Christian. *Praise God Pastor Nerren was released, and pray for freedom of all Christians entering India to spread the Gospel.*

4 Christians imprisoned in Iran

Imprisonment of Iranian Christians continues. The four converts are being held at Lakan Prison on unknown charges, ICC says. *Pray for these Christians and all other imprisoned Christians in Iran.*

Mobs terrorize Indian families with Christians

Armed mobs recently terrorized 16 families with Christian members in Jharkhand state in India, Voice of the Martyrs-Canada reports. The militants threatened to kill the Christians unless they returned to the animistic Sarna religion. A pastor reports that two of the families have returned to the ancestral religion. The other families filed a police report on May 7. *Pray for those Christians standing up for their faith and for the families who yielded to pressure to return to Jesus.*

COVID-19 doesn't slow down attacks

Militant Islamic groups continued to attack Christians in Nigeria despite the COVID-19 lockdowns there, Missions News Network reports. Fulani herdsmen killed men, women, and children in at least 13 assaults in March and April. *Pray that the attackers' hearts would be changed and for protection for Christians in Nigeria.*

Eight assaulted, arrested in Indian village

Eight Christians who gathered in a home in India to assemble relief packages for the poor were assaulted by police and arrested for allegedly violating COVID-19 gathering restrictions, MNN says. The eight were released after a village leader vouched for them, but charges were still filed. *Pray for Pastor Ramesh Kumar and other Christians in the village.* ♦♦♦



Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

HEBREWS 13:3

Our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world are being persecuted for the sake of the Gospel. We need to remember them in prayer.

Each month, we will provide updates and offer prayer points gleaned from a variety of sources. Please use them in your personal or group prayer time.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PERSECUTED CHURCH:

International Christian Concern
persecution.org
800-422-5441

World Watch Monitor
worldwatchmonitor.org

And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father Who is in secret, and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you. **Matthew 6:5-6**

✂ Detach and use as bookmark or on your refrigerator

THE DOORPOST

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9; 11:18-21



And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father Who is in secret, and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you.

MATTHEW 6:5-6

NOT ALL OF OUR prayers will receive a reward from God, no matter how eloquent they may seem. The question is who we are trying to impress. Fervent, heartfelt prayers to Him are good. We should pour out our hearts to Him all the time (*Psalms* 62:8). It is our secret prayers to Him that bring His favor and blessing, not the ones intended to impress others.



For the Kingdom,
Ray King

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray King". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.